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BOYD LEE SPAHR

Class of 1900

THE SPAHR LECTURES

DICKINSON COLLEGE

VOLUME 4

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FOREWORD

THE FIRST volume of Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana, 1947–1950, bears the title, *Bulwark of Liberty,* a phrase taken from the Latin motto chosen by John Dickinson for the College seal. The second, 1951–1956, appeared as *John and Mary's College,* a name which Benjamin Rush had proposed for the new institution. It did not, however, suit the taste of John and Mary Dickinson, who must surely have been abashed by this idea of equating them with the monarchs, William and Mary. By nature and background, they preferred plain, straightforward titles. So also does Boyd Lee Spahr, at whose suggestion the third volume of lectures, 1957–1961, came out as *Early Dickinsoniana,* and by whose wish this one declares itself more plainly yet.

After a quarter of a century, the lecturers themselves form a goodly company—Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., Lyman H. Butterfield, Brooke Hindle, Philip S. Klein, John A. Monroe, Roy F. Nichols, Charles Page Smith, Frederick B. Tolles, and many others. Dickinson College remains deeply indebted to them all, not only for the learning and talent they have given to this series, but for their continuing friendly participation, from time to time, in our affairs.

Bulwark of Liberty was published by the College to commemorate Dr. Spahr's fiftieth year as a Dickinson alumnus—a half century of devoted aid and leadership whose academic ideal has been reflected in the quality and content of the Spahr Lectures. This new volume, twenty years later, heralds the coming bicen-

tennial celebration in 1973. More than that, it is part of a continuing monument to this one man's warm appreciation of historical scholarship. The lectures, touching either lightly or in detail on the life of this college, will inevitably, some day, appraise his own place in educational history. Today, inevitably, he himself reviews a host of memories, enjoying, appraising and, occasionally, deploring those which, from this perspective, he has come to regard as mistakes. If such they be, one must observe, the fact is apparent only in the light of new conditions, of an intellectual freedom into which he himself has led us—an era gratefully to be cherished and prolonged.

LIBERAL EDUCATION: WHAT IS IT?

SAUL SACK

February 16, 1962

Saul Sack

Professor Sack first came to Dickinson in the summer of 1952, pursuing the research which led eventually to the publication of his definitive two-volume HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA, *in which the founding and growth of Dickinson College hold a conspicuous place. Those days spent in our archives began a friendly association which has continued through the years. He is currently a senior member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Education of the University of Pennsylvania.*

LIBERAL EDUCATION: WHAT IS IT?

A great deal is being said and written about the importance and significance to contemporary society of liberally educated people. But few pause to define the term "liberal education" or "liberal arts." Implicit in the words of their advocates is the assumption that people are generally agreed as to the content which the terms comprehend, and that this content is much the same now as it has been in the past. Historically this supposition is inaccurate; nor does it correctly picture the current temper of thought. The liberal arts curriculum, and its product the liberally educated man, changed, albeit more slowly, as society changed. As we shall see, they represented something quite different in past ages, or even a century ago, from that with which they are invested by varying current opinions.

In searching back through the pages of the past, men are wont to refer to "Greece, that point of light in history," and to imply that there was one Greek pattern of liberal education. But the education fit for free men in Sparta was quite different from the generous education which flourished in the free and stimulating environment of Athens. Yet the Spartans doubtless considered their narrow military training, though virtually devoid of letters,

as fit for free men and fit to make them free. Even at Athens the practice was in many respects far removed from the ideal patterns of liberal education set forth by her philosophers. The leitmotif of early Athenian education was service to the state. Such service could best be provided by men whose education reflected an harmonious balance between mind and body. The palaestra afforded the educational food for the body, and the music school the intellectual diet for the soul. However, the attainment of this ideal liberal education was limited by factors of wealth, sex and the concept of labor. Plato informs us that education is a luxury for "those who have the means, and those who have the means are the rich; their children begin to go to school soonest and leave off latest."[1] Athenian girls were excluded from the liberal education which their brothers might enjoy. Slaves, and those whose limited means forced them to ignoble tasks, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, had neither the leisure nor the wealth that the pursuit of the life of the intellect required. Whether narrow or broad, mean or generous, practical or intellectual, Athenian education had a utilitarian end in view—service to the state.

If Athenian education extolled the speculative life, Roman education, by contrast, was eminently practical. Cato, though he knew the Greek world of thought and deemed it good, rested his ideal education for a worthy citizen on practical training in the arts of agriculture, war, law, oratory, and medicine.[2] Cicero would unite the liberal and the practical which so many modern schools would strive to hold in fruitless isolation. He was sublimely oblivious to quarrels about names. Should one call the "philosopher, who instructs us fully in things and words, an orator," why object? And if one would call the orator, who has "wisdom united with eloquence a philosopher," why complain?[3] The Romans, then,

[1] *Protagoras,* 326. From Benjamin Jowett, editor and translator, *The Works of Plato,* (New York, 1892).

[2] J. E. Sandys, *A Companion to Latin Studies* (Cambridge, 1925), 229.

[3] J. S. Watson, translator, *Cicero: On Oratory and Orators; with His Letters to Quintus and Brutus* (London, 1891), III, 19, 33.

would combine the seven liberal arts of the Greeks (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy), with the practical arts, of daily living.

The decline of the ancient world was marked by a corresponding decline in learning. Culture, reduced to a low ebb, was pressed into the service of the Eternal City of God. The Greco-Roman conceptions of liberal education centered in secular life were replaced by an ecclesiastically oriented, formal education whose prime determiners were faith and eternity. With the advent of the New Life, man began to seek answers to questions about himself, his relations to others and to the mundane world. And in this quest he turned again to the learning of the ancient past. Greek language and literature were slowly admitted to the studies of the medieval university and were combined with the scholastic studies of honored worth to form an expanded curriculum.

It was this curriculum, formalized and virtually devoid of its humanistic content, modified and adapted to suit the peculiar conditions of a frontier society and the requirements of a theocratic state, that we find at Harvard College in the period of its infancy. It will profit us to examine this course of study, at first only three years in length and later, in 1654, extended to four years.

"The program was arranged for the so-called First, Second and Third Classes. The first class was of third-year men. The attention of each class was concentrated for an entire day upon one or two studies, with 'theory' in the forenoon and 'practice' in the afternoon. Monday and Tuesday were devoted to philosophy, including logic and physics for the first year, ethics and politics for the second year, with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy for the third year. All this work was done in the morning hours. In the afternoon came philosophical disputations for each class in his own field of study ('every one in his art'). Wednesday was Greek day for all classes. First-year men studied etymology and syntax in the forenoon, and practiced the rules of grammar in the afternoon; the second class studied prosody and dialectics from 9 to 10 a.m., and

practiced in poesy after dinner; third-year men did likewise in the theory and practice of Greek composition, prose and verse. Thursday was devoted to the 'Eastern tongues,' with the theory of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac grammar in the morning, and practice in corresponding Biblical texts in the afternoon. Friday was given up to rhetoric, and all were required to practice English composition, and once a month to declaim. Saturday, at eight o'clock in the morning all the students were taught 'Divinity Catecheticall,' and at 9 o'clock 'Common Places.' These latter were common topics of scholastic discussion and digests of doctrine, argument or opinion. The last and least place was given to history and nature. At 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon, immediately after the 12 o'clock dinner, and at the fag end of the week, the students were taught history in the winter, and the nature of plants in the summer."[4]

Founded on the model of the British universities, and designed to raise up a class of learned men for the Christian ministry, this was the system which time had honored at Oxford and Cambridge, and which time continued to honor on this continent with very slight modifications down nearly to the close of the eighteenth century. But a new institution was making its appearance, less bound by the forces of tradition, and strongly influenced by the eminently secular and utilitarian philosophy of Benjamin Franklin. The colonial curriculum adopted by the University of Pennsylvania in 1756 differed from those of its contemporaries, Harvard, Yale and Princeton, particularly with respect to the absence of any special orientation to the study of theology, and in the subordination of the classical languages to disciplines of a more practical nature.[5] This does not mean that the study of Latin and Greek was neglected. On the contrary, the afternoons were devoted almost exclusively to the ancient languages and to rhetorical studies based largely upon those languages. Unlike its contemporaries, however,

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[4] Quoted in Louis F. Snow, *The College Curriculum in the United States* (New York, 1907), 31–32.

[5] *Ibid.*, 72.

the University's conception of what constituted the proper province of liberal studies embraced a much broader view. In addition to the higher mathematics as far as calculus, "Instrumental Philosophy" included such practical subjects as "Surveying and Dialing," "Navigation," "Architecture, with Fortifications"; the studies in "Moral Philosophy" considered "Natural and Civil Law," "Civil History," "Laws and Government," "Trade and Commerce"; and "Natural Philosophy" comprehended "Mechanic Powers," "Hydrostatics," "Pneumatics," "Lights and Colours," "Optics," "Perspective," "Astronomy," "Natural History of Vegetables," "Natural History of Animals," "Chemistry of Fossils," and "Chemistry of Agriculture."[6] According to Provost Stillé, "in 1756 no such comprehensive scheme of education existed in any college in the American colonies."[7]

Nor did its progenitors conceive of this curriculum as fixed and immutable, the *sine qua non* for the liberally educated. The student was urged to augment the work of the classroom with a suggested list of supplementary readings, and to consider the whole of his college education as a prelude to further study. "Life itself being too short to obtain a perfect acquaintance with the whole circle of the Sciences," said William Smith, "nothing has ever been proposed by any plan of *University Education,* but to lay such a general foundation in all branches of literature, as may enable youth to perfect themselves in those particular parts, to which their business or genius, may afterwards lead them." Further, he continued, "and scarce any thing has more obstructed the advancement of sound learning, than a vain imagination, that a few years, spent at college, can render youth such *absolute Masters of Science,* as to absolve them from all future study."[8]

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[6] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* August 12, 1756.

[7] Charles J. Stillé, *A Memoir of the Rev. William Smith, D.D., Provost of the College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1869), 12.

[8] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* August 12, 1756.

The uniqueness of this program, then, lay not in the exclusion of the ancient languages and their literature, for these still remained the heart of the curriculum, but in its comparative breadth of scope and perspective. The liberal arts were not to be confined within the narrow limits of theological requirements, but were to be expanded to serve the demands of secular life. If the curriculum became relatively static, more concerned with the fostering of mental discipline than with the development of general cultural attainments, it was not because of a lack of vision on the part of its original promulgators, but because later educators entertained a different conception of what constituted a liberal education.

Although the University's collegiate course of studies following the Revolution still contained many of the elements embraced by its colonial forerunner, it no longer encouraged private study, or exhibited the attribute of flexibility. The excellence of the old curriculum, which so profoundly influenced the course of the post-revolutionary colleges of the United States, provided the rationale for inhibiting its further growth. Prescription rather than election became the dominant characteristic. With the University's adoption of the four-year curriculum in 1826 the ancient languages formed the core of the course. These were supplemented by the study of mathematics, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. But their practical application was no longer emphasized.[9] The function of the college was now conceived at the University and elsewhere as "the systematic development and discipline of the faculties of the mind, in due proportion and in a natural order."[10]

This modern dogma of formal discipline, though often applied to quite different studies, found their original sources in Plato's theory of the value of certain subjects, and Aristotle's doctrine of faculties of the rational soul—reason, memory, *et al.*, whose

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[9] Minutes of Trustees, January 3, 1826, VII, 135 *ff.*, University of Pennsylvania.

[10] F. A. P. Barnard, "On Improvements Practicable in American Colleges," *Barnard's American Journal of Education* (January, 1856), I, 177.

activity is the highest good. Plato's choice of disciplinary studies harmonized with his doctrine of a world of perfect truth, or reality —absolute ideas, universals, eternal patterns—transcending the material world, without beginning and without end. Aristotle rejected this doctrine of ideas, though he agreed with Plato in dividing the soul into rational and irrational parts.

Difficult of access, Plato's world of true being could be apprehended only by gifted minds, properly schooled to deal with pure abstraction. The best disciplines are arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, and dialectic. Arithmetic and other members of the quadrivium may serve immediately useful ends, of course. But arithmetic is not to make a shopkeeper; nor is geometry to measure a field. Education, as Aristotle taught, must not be concerned with preparation to make money.

Surveying the modern groves of Academe, one finds no such economy of disciplines as in Plato, but rather a host of them, old and new: arithmetic, geometry, algebra, Latin, Greek, astronomy, chemistry, botany, geology and, ultimately, even manual training and domestic science. Both ancient and recent whetstones of mind found more or less distinguished counselors to argue the legitimacy of their claims. Nevertheless, it was first and foremost the classical languages and mathematics in whose behalf disciplinary arguments were advanced.

This disciplinary view of linguistic and mathematical studies had already been officially adopted by the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania in 1824. In a statement of principles they declared: "Liberal education must rest for its basis on an accurate and extensive knowledge of the learned languages, when the acquisition of them has cultivated the taste, strengthened the Memory and Stored the Mind with the terms and the Capacity to analyse them. Adapted to every branch of Knowledge an introduction of the *precise Sciences,* of Mathematics and the art of reasoning is peculiarly valuable. . . . Hence it is proposed to devote the two first years of College Discipline, chiefly to the study of the *Greek*

and Latin Languages. . . . To give a similar preference, decided and unequivocal as a preference, although short of exclusive occupation, to *Mathematical Studies* during the third or Junior year. And to lead the attention, toward the end of the Collegiate course, mainly to the *Philosophy of Matter and of Mind."*[11]

Yale College also emphasized the disciplinary aspects of a liberal education. "The two great points to be gained in intellectual culture," the College maintained, in 1827, "are the *discipline* and the *furniture* of the mind; expanding its powers, and storing it with knowledge. The former of these is, perhaps, the more important of the two." Consequently, the college course should aim at the "daily and vigorous exercise" of "the faculties of the student."[12]

As religiously oriented colleges arose they too adopted the principle of the fixed curriculum with its emphasis on Latin and Greek. Lacking the staff and facilities of the older universities their programs included less of the sciences. Moreover, some were more resistant to change and tended to cling to the practices of the past despite the growing demand for liberalization. They presumably held with F. A. P. Barnard of the University of Mississippi who declared in 1855: "I say . . . that the business of our colleges is to educate, and not to inform. And no argument, which goes to decry the freedom with which they employ mathematical or classical studies, as instruments of mental discipline, on the score that these subjects are less practical in their nature than something else might be, is valid, until it shall have been shown—a thing which has never yet been done—that this something else has an equal educational value with the studies so denounced. I am not prepared, therefore, to assent to the judiciousness of any of those proposed changes of our present plan of college education, by which the amount either of classical or of mathematical study, now

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[11] Minutes of Trustees, July 23, 1824, VII, 82–83, University of Pennsylvania.

[12] Quoted in Thomas Woody, *Liberal Education for Free Men* (Philadelphia, 1951), 202.

exacted, shall be materially diminished. And, entertaining these opinions, I am equally unprepared to admit the propriety of abolishing the curriculum of study, or even of introducing parallel courses of study, if these courses are to run through any considerable portion of the time now devoted to college education."[13]

That these conceptions were widely entertained is further evidenced by the report of a committee on college curriculum to the Pennsylvania State Educational Convention of 1862. The committee advanced a twofold premise concerning the objectives of education, and stated in its report: "The *immediate* object is *discipline, culture* and *the fixing of character on just principles*. . . . The *ulterior* object is to furnish this form [discipline] with the matter which relates the object to the activities and practical events of life. . . . In seeking then, in detail, what studies will best meet the requisitions of the case, we accept, in the main, the established usage of our Colleges, as expressing the judgment of the learned, modified and corrected from the experiences of the past. We have then, first, as the studies which contribute to discipline most effectively, the ancient classical languages, pure Mathematics and Logic. We reckon these about equal in degree in effecting discipline, tho' quite diverse in kind. We think the value of the Mathematics has been overrated, and that of the study of the Classics underrated, in this respect. Mathematics and Logic contribute to discipline merely—they give only empty form; the study of the classics contributes likewise substance, and induces a habit of mind adapted to the practical processes of life and the determination of moral questions. If now we add to these, the inculcation of the doctrines of christianity [*sic*] and the conviction of its truth as the system of the world, we have the main features of the formative part of the subject."[14]

The doctrine of formal discipline, however, had vigorous

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[13] F. A. P. Barnard, "Improvements in Colleges," I, 179 *f.*

[14] "The Proper Condition, Relations and Course of Studies of the Colleges," *Pennsylvania School Journal* (September, 1862), XI, 95.

opponents as well as advocates. Horace Greeley, in a commencement address on "The Relations of Learning to Labor," delivered before the literary societies of Hamilton College (July 23, 1844), stated: ". . . permit me to hazard a criticism on so much of our educational processes—no great portion of any college course, I will hope—as are undertaken for the sake, it is said, of 'disciplining the mind.' I ask a student friend why he, who is aspiring to the Christian Ministry, should devote so much time to a science so little pertinent to his future calling as Mathematics, and he answers that the study of Mathematics is an admirable discipline for the mind! Need I say to you that I neither appreciate the force of the reason nor discern the benefits of the discipline? I do not say that this or any other science may not be eminently calculated to subserve the purpose contemplated—I simply demur to the necessity or fitness of pursuing mental discipline apart from healthful mental activity in the sphere of practical life."[15]

Thirteen years later, in an even more forceful statement, Greeley insisted: ". . . mind is best disciplined by its own proper work; and not by making this discipline the great end. I would say to the farmer's son, poring over Greek verbs and Hebrew roots and accents; to the damsel of sixteen, wasting her sweetness on algebra and geometry, what do you propose to do with this . . . ? If you propose to turn it to some practical account, very well; but if you only acquire it with an eye to mental discipline, then I protest it is a waste of time and energy."[16]

Furthermore, strict prescription and the continued dominance of the ancient languages could not long remain unchallenged in an environment bristling with scientific discovery and technological innovation. These had a noticeable effect in influencing the trend towards secularization of church related colleges following the Civil War. The adoption of new scientific and technical curricula

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[15] Horace Greeley, *Hints towards Reforms, in Lectures, Addresses and Other Writings* (New York, 1850), 121–122.

[16] Quoted in Woody, *Liberal Education*, 212.

in the latter half of the nineteenth century further contributed to the undermining of the hegemony of Latin and Greek in the fixed college program. These continuing influences, coupled with the granting of the student the right to select certain of his courses, gradually wrought changes in the college curriculum and changes in the conception of what constitutes a liberal education.

The ancient languages have long had their critics. John Milton insisted that "we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latine and Greek, as might be learnt otherwise easily and delightfully in one year." Furthermore, he maintained that "though a Linguist should pride himself to have all the Tongues that *Babel* cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the Words & Lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteem'd a learned man, as any Yoeman or tradesman competently wise in his Mother Dialect only."[17] Benjamin Franklin deplored the emphasis placed upon them at the College, Academy and Charitable School, to the detriment of a practical "English" education.[18] "Dr. Rush," said Mathew Carey, "in 1789, commenced a violent attack upon the dead languages—of which the object was to extirpate them altogether from our schools and colleges." Had he been less vituperative, Carey continued, "The attempt . . . might have succeeded, and done infinite good," but it "utterly failed from its being carried too far."[19] In 1826 a movement was set afoot to establish a college in Philadelphia "where English literature, the sciences, and the liberal arts, shall be fully taught, unconnected with the Greek and Latin, and for admission into which there shall be no prerequisite of having studied these languages."[20]

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[17] John Milton, *Tractate on Education,* ed. by Oscar Browning (Cambridge, 1897), 4.

[18] Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia," in Thomas Woody (ed.), *Educational Views of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1931), I *ff.*

[19] Mathew Carey, *Reflections on the Proposed Plan for Establishing a College in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1826), iii.

[20] *American Journal of Education* (September, 1826), I, 566 *ff.*

But these long standing symbols of culture were too firmly entrenched to be dislodged by occasional attack, no matter how "violent." Changes in the curriculum were effected, at first, by the gradual addition of new disciplines rather than by the displacement of either Latin or Greek. Thus, Jefferson College added chemistry to the curriculum in 1831.[21] Dickinson College expanded its course in 1830 to include zoology, botany, history, mineralogy, geology, and lectures on philology.[22] In 1846 the trustees authorized the faculty "to allow the Modern Languages to be substituted for certain other studies in the College Course, at the discretion of the Faculty and option of the Student." Nevertheless they made it clear the following year that the modern languages were not to "be required as necessary to graduation."[23] Other colleges followed suit introducing as early as 1834 what were called optional studies. That these were not considered as essential parts of the regular curriculum for which credit was given toward the degree, is evidenced by a statement in the Gettysburg College catalogue of 1837: "German, French, Hebrew, Navigation, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, Anatomy and Physiology being optional Studies, are attended to by the members of any Class having the necessary knowledge and leisure."[24]

This cautious introduction of "optional studies" by no means represented the beginning of an unbroken linear continuum. There was a backsliding as well as advance. On the one hand, the president of Dickinson College stated, in 1865: "We think the time has come for a partial reorganization of the College Course of Studies. There is a demand for something more practical which we are not at liberty to ignore. We think the first two years of the College Courses should be devoted mainly to the Elements of Classical learning & the pure Mathematics; and that after that,

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[21] Minutes of Trustees, April 28, 1813, I, 81, Jefferson College.

[22] *Pittsburgh Gazette,* September 21, 1830.

[23] Minutes of Trustees, July 8, 1846, IV, 58, Dickinson College; *ibid.,* July 7, 1847, IV, 76.

[24] *Catalogue,* 1837, p. 12, Gettysburg College.

there should be divergencies; that the young man may choose those studies best adapted to qualify him for his calling." His words were heeded; for the following year he reported to the trustees that "In exercising the discretion committed to them to determine the Elective studies," the faculty resolved to permit the substitution of analytical chemistry, French and calculus for the Latin, Greek and Hebrew of the junior and senior years.[25] On the other hand, although the curriculum of Marshall College had contained optional studies in 1840, the attitude of the trustees towards course selection had so changed some thirty years later as to prompt them to declare adamantly: "There are . . . no optional courses of study in Franklin and Marshall College, in which the learner is allowed to choose for himself what he shall learn. It receives no irregular students, as they are called, and has no provisional or mixed classes."[26]

It is clear from the foregoing that no specific date can be designated as marking the point at which the elective principle was universally adopted. Nevertheless, there were gradual increments to the curriculum and, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, wherever these forced a modification of the prescribed college course, Latin and Greek were usually the first of the ancient disciplines to feel the impact of the introduction of the new studies and the atomization of the old. In 1857 the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania were asked to consider "the great inequality existing in the portion of the present course of collegiate instruction which is now given to the studies in the Greek and Latin languages, as compared with that given to the Studies in the various branches of the English language and literature." They were urged to establish professorships in the modern languages coequal with those of Latin and Greek "so that it shall

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[25] Minutes of Trustees, June 27, 1865, V, 7, Dickinson College; *ibid.*, June 26, 1866, V, 24.

[26] *Catalogue,* 1840–41, p. 19, Marshall College; *ibid.,* 1870–71, p. 11, Franklin and Marshall College.

be in the power and option of the students in the Department of Arts to receive instruction in the Modern Languages and Literature, in lieu of the Ancient languages and literature . . . and to be entitled to degrees and Collegiate honours for proficiency in the modern languages and literature, equally with that in the ancient languages and literature." However, the trustees were not yet ready to entertain such a radical departure from tradition and resolved "that in their opinion it was inexpedient to introduce any changes in the course of instruction in the Department of Arts."[27]

But the demands of society in transformation, and the influence of examples already set by such respected institutions as Harvard and Yale, could not long be ignored. In 1867 the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania pointed to the plan of elective studies already in force at these New England colleges and expressed the "very decided opinion" that "the adoption of a similar system in the University would probably meet with the approval of the public and be attended with an enlarged patronage of the institution." They proposed that the instructional staff be enlarged and that electives commence at the close of the sophomore year. This system, the faculty claimed, "will permit a considerable enlargement of the partial course of study that is now to some extent pursued in the Department of Arts and will give the whole course such an adaptation to the present views of the public on the subject of practical education as will meet and we trust command the full confidence in the ability of the University to satisfy all who desire a liberal education." The trustees concurred with this estimate of the public temper and resolved to place the elective plan into operation.[28]

Newly formed institutions, arising in this moderating climate of innovation, experienced less difficulty in embracing the elective

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[27] Minutes of Trustees, May 5, 1857, X, 230–231, University of Pennsylvania; *ibid.*, December 1, 1857, X, 249–250.

[28] *Ibid.*, January 1, 1867, X, 587–589.

principle. The first catalogue of Lebanon Valley College, in 1867, announced that "The Laws of the College provide that students of any Course may elect to pursue an equivalent study in any other course, with the consent of the Faculty."[29] Swarthmore College, the first institution of higher education in Pennsylvania to permit electives in all four years of the liberal arts course, opened its doors for instruction in 1869 with the elective principle in full operation. The College had so completely adopted the new conception of curriculum organization, that from the outset it required only two years of Latin for the Bachelor of Arts degree, while the study of Greek was entirely optional.[30] Many of the older institutions, however, responded rather slowly and cautiously to the demand for curriculum liberalization. Space does not permit a detailed recitation of their hesitancy and final capitulation. Two examples will suffice. Bucknell University, in 1868, postponed action on the recommendation of a committee of trustees to allow the faculty to introduce a limited system of optional studies until 1876, when partial selection was introduced in the junior year only, permitting the student a choice of either Greek or French.[31] Franklin and Marshall College was the prime example of reluctant yielding. It was not until 1895 that the catalogue contained an outline of the liberal arts curriculum in which, for the first time, elective studies were offered in the senior year including the formerly prescribed Latin, Greek and calculus.[32]

With the rather general adoption of the group system of curriculum organization by the close of the second decade of the twentieth century, the conception of a liberal arts education underwent further revision. In adopting the recommendation of the majority of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, in 1914,

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[29] *Catalogue,* 1866–67, p. 31, Lebanon Valley College.

[30] Minutes of Managers, December 7, 1869, I, 77, Swarthmore College; *Catalogue,* 1869–70, pp. 38–40, Swarthmore College.

[31] Minutes of Trustees, July 29, 1868, II, 235 *ff.*, Bucknell University; *Catalogue,* 1875–76, pp. 10–15, Bucknell University.

[32] *Catalogue,* 1894–95, pp. 23–30, Franklin and Marshall College.

that "but one degree, A.B. be given for the courses in Arts and Sciences," that the group system be instituted, and that only three units of an ancient language be required, the trustees gave expression to the conflict between the proponents of the new and the advocates of the old idea of what properly constituted a liberal education. The report of the "Committee on Curriculum" stated: "After a full interchange of views, it appeared that Professors Cheyney and Graves, representing the majority of the Faculties, were insistent that the degree of A.B. should be given to students completing the proposed curriculum, without requiring both Latin and Greek as part of the course. They conceded that the A.B. Degree of the University of Pennsylvania had always been based upon a course of instruction which included the classics, and that this degree had always had this significance down to the present time.

"It was explained, on behalf of the Committee of your Board, that it was not proposed to reopen the question of the curriculum. We suggested, however, that, inasmuch as the degree of A.B. was understood to involve an affirmation that the holder had accomplished a course including classics, it was a misuse of terms to confer it where Latin and Greek had not been required. We further suggested that if it be true, as alleged, that the proposed courses in science and other studies are of equal 'cultural' value with the classics, it would seem reasonable to confer a degree involving an avowal of what has been done, rather than that the University should press into service one that has always meant something else.

"To these suggestions it was answered that most institutions in the United States are now using the degree proposed, and that it no longer means what it formerly did; but that it still has a value so much greater than any other, that the University would suffer if not authorized to confer it upon students who have not earned it according to the older standards.

"To at least one member of your Committee the pending ques-

tion seems to involve a more important matter than academic propriety. The majority of the Committee, are, however, of the opinion that, as all members of the teaching body, with the exception of those connected with the Classical Department, are insistent upon change, it would not be wise to oppose the wishes of so large a majority of those to whom we must look for our actual educational results."[33]

Latin and Greek, formerly the heart of the liberal arts curriculum, now began to enter a period where not only their preeminence but their very survival was threatened. The process of elimination, initiated slowly at first by a few institutions, gathered such momentum that by the close of the fourth decade of the twentieth century it was the exceptional college which demanded either one or the other of the candidate for the Bachelor of Arts degree. The experiences of a few Pennsylvania institutions will serve to indicate the nature of the general trend. Geneva College, in 1919, offered the degree symbolic of the liberal arts program without requiring the pursuit of either Latin or Greek.[34] Bucknell University eliminated the ancient languages from the prescribed arts curriculum in 1920.[35] These were followed by Temple University and Lebanon Valley College in 1923;[36] Grove City College, 1929;[37] Bryn Mawr College, 1931;[38] Ursinus College, 1933;[39] Lafayette College, 1934;[40] Franklin and Marshall College, 1934;[41] Moravian College, 1938;[42] Muhlenberg College, 1940;[43] Haverford College,

[33] Minutes of Trustees, June 8, 1914, XVI, 132–133, University of Pennsylvania.

[34] *Catalogue,* 1918–19, pp. 24–26, Geneva College.

[35] *Catalogue,* 1919–20, pp. 34–35, Bucknell University.

[36] *Catalogue,* 1922–23, pp. 57 *ff.,* Temple University; *Catalogue,* 1922–23, p. 29, Lebanon Valley College.

[37] *Catalogue,* 1928–29, pp. 39–42, Grove City College.

[38] *Catalogue,* 1931, pp. 41–43, Bryn Mawr College.

[39] *Catalogue,* 1932, pp. 33, 136, Ursinus College.

[40] *Catalogue,* 1933–34, pp. 28, 54, Lafayette College.

[41] *Catalogue,* 1933–34, p. 34, Franklin and Marshall College.

[42] *Catalogue,* 1937–38, p. 36, Moravian College.

[43] *Catalogue,* 1939–40, pp. 45–46, Muhlenberg College.

1944;[44] and Dickinson College in 1947.[45]

The introduction of the elective principle and the gradual diminution in time allotted to the pursuit of the ancient languages permitted the inclusion of studies formerly regarded as foreign to the prescribed liberal arts program. Although occasional acknowledgment may have been given them as to their practical utility or their salutary effect on the physical and cultural development of the student, the modern foreign languages, music and the arts, and physical education, were only later accorded "collegiate status" in the sense that they were recognized as worthy of credit towards the baccalaureate degree. It is to a brief examination of their rise and their eventual acceptance as college courses that we shall now turn our attention.

When the trustees of the Academy and Charitable School drew up the "Constitutions of the Publick Academy in the City of Philadelphia," in 1749, they made clear provision for the teaching of "the most useful living foreign languages, French, German and Spanish."[46] To carry out this mandate, the trustees, in 1754, employed a Mr. Cramer, who, they were informed, "was qualified for Teaching the French, Italian & German Languages,"[47] Since college classes had not yet been organized, only the students of the Academy were able to avail themselves of Mr. Cramer's services. But his tenure was short-lived. In 1755, "the Trustees being of Opinion his being longer employ'd in the Academy was unnecessary, agreed he should be paid up to this Time, and to give him a Quarter Salary over."[48]

Prior to his coming to the Academy and Charitable School, William Smith had made provision for the teaching of French, Italian, Spanish and German in his mythical College of Mirania.

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[44] *Catalogue,* 1943–44, pp. 24–25, Haverford College.

[45] *Catalogue,* 1946–47, pp. 34–35, Dickinson College.

[46] Minutes of Trustees, November 13, 1749, I, 1, College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia.

[47] *Ibid.,* January 8, 1754, I, 38.

[48] *Ibid.,* July 11, 1755, I, 56.

These, however, were not to be part of the regular college curriculum and were to be studied at private hours at the option of the student and during his leisure. The program of college studies adopted in 1756 made no mention of the modern foreign languages. Although an occasional teacher of French and Spanish were employed from time to time, there was no organized plan for the inclusion of the modern languages until the University of the State of Pennsylvania established a German professorship in 1780.[49] What was particularly significant of this first academic professorship of German in the United States was its status in the college faculty. It was not (as were the former and most of the subsequent professorships of modern languages in the University) regarded as a subordinate appendage to the regularly constituted faculty to be attended largely by the Academy students. In constituting the chair the trustees decreed that it shall be the duty of the professor of German "to teach the Latin and Greek Languages, thro' the medium of the German language, as well in the Academy as in the University."[50] A measure of the importance attached to it by the University authorities may be gauged by the action of the trustees in petitioning and obtaining from the legislature in 1785 an act declaring that the professorship of German shall be continued in the University "as part of the system of education carried on therein."[51]

However, with the demise of the German department after 1787,[52] the University again reverted to the former position of viewing the modern languages as extracurricular studies of a secondary nature to be pursued only by those who had the leisure and desire to do so. A modest advance in status was achieved by the modern languages in 1846. In that year a "Professor" rather

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[49] *Ibid.*, January 10, 1780, III, 38–39, University of the State of Pennsylvania.
[50] *Ibid.*, 39.
[51] Bioren, *Laws*, II, 352 (Act of September 22, 1785).
[52] Faculty to Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, 1787, University Papers, I.

than a teacher of the French language was appointed. At the same time it was "understood and declared by the Trustees, that he is not a member of the Faculty of Arts, nor receives any salary from the funds of the University."[53] Nor were the courses offered by him or the "Professor of the Italian Language and Literature," appointed in 1851, included in the college curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The modern languages achieved further recognition in 1852 when the trustees adopted a separate science curriculum for which the Bachelor of Science degree was offered. In this new program they were specifically included among the course offerings. However, despite the adoption by the trustees, in 1854, of a resolution "that instruction in the French Language be made a part of the regular course of studies," it was not until 1867, with the adoption of the elective principle, that the modern foreign languages were accorded equal rank with the other disciplines of the liberal arts curriculum.[54]

Dickinson College had much the same experience. As early as 1785 the Plan of Education (in whose formulation Benjamin Rush participated, and which appears to be in his handwriting), provided for instruction in French and German along with the ancient languages of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.[55] With respect to the modern languages, however, there is no evidence that the plan emerged beyond the ideational stage. In fact, an advertisement of the board of trustees dated December 19, 1786, listing the professors and their departments of instruction, made no reference to them.[56]

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[53] Minutes of Trustees, November 10, 1846, IX, n.p., University of Pennsylvania; *ibid.*, December 1, 1846, IX, n.p.

[54] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1851, October 7, 1851, IX, n.p.; *Catalogue,* 1850–51, pp. 31–33, University of Pennsylvania; Minutes of Trustees, May 4, 1852, IX, n.p., University of Pennsylvania, *ibid.*, February 28, 1854, X, 47–48; *ibid.*, January 1, 1867, X, 587–589.

[55] Plan of Education, August 11, 1785, Dickinson College.

[56] *The Columbian Magazine, or Monthly Miscellany,* VI, No. 1 (February, 1787), printed on the inside front cover.

For the remainder of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth century the modern languages were noticeably absent from the curriculum of Dickinson College. In 1834 the catalogue announced that in the senior year "At the request of the student the Modern Languages may be substituted for a portion of the Mathematical or Classical course." At the same time the public was informed that "The two lower classes only being formed, the departments marked with an asterisk [the department of modern languages was one of these], have not yet been supplied."[57] Two years later the option of substituting the modern languages for the classical and mathematical studies of the senior year was withdrawn.[58] In 1849 the study of French and German was made mandatory for the senior and junior classes. Though this decision was rescinded partially in 1851 and totally in 1853, they were given permissive life the following year.[59] Despite these lapses, the place of the modern languages in the Dickinson College curriculum was assured after 1849; and, though they suffered occasional infringements, their status was no longer seriously challenged.

Like the modern languages, physical education, music, and the fine arts experienced similar vicissitudes of fortune. Each of these had been extolled by Plato and Aristotle as essential and necessary components of a liberal education. They regarded music as indispensable to the proper intellectual enjoyment of leisure, which is noble and liberal. Besides this, however, music has more exalted educational functions. Just as gymnastic forms the body, various rhythms strike kindred chords in the soul and give it a certain character. "The right kind of music, that which is ennobling and harmonious, will set the noblest chords of the soul vibrating." As for drawing, it is particularly important because it contributes

[57] *Catalogue,* 1834, pp. 10, 12, Dickinson College.

[58] *Ibid.,* 1836, pp. 5, 18.

[59] Minutes of Trustees, June 25, 1851, IV, 180, Dickinson College; *ibid.,* July 13, 1853, IV, 249.

to sound judgment of "beauty of the human form."[60]

But these sentiments were foreign to our educational forebears. They may have agreed in principle with the idea of a sound mind in a sound body, but did little to bring it about. Physical education as a consciously organized activity in the college program was almost completely lacking before the late nineteenth century. Viewed in many instances as a contributor to indecorous behavior, and as a possible source of distraction from the pursuit of serious study, the early tendency was to discourage rather than to foster participation in it.[61] Not until after the nineteenth century had passed its mid-point did physical education begin to penetrate the cloistered walls of the colleges;[62] and it was not until after the last century had entered its final decade that compulsory physical education became the rule rather than the exception in the regular college curriculum.[63]

Music and the fine arts, those ennobling pursuits extolled by the ancient Greeks, suffered an uncertain and precarious existence in the hands of our predecessors. Their practitioners were frequently looked upon askance as lacking the moral fiber of decent citizens. The suspicion, for example, voiced at the University of Pennsylvania was by no means unique. In agreeing to a professorship of the "science of music" in 1875, the trustees specifically stipulated that the incumbent "shall hold his office for the term of three years if he shall so long behave himself well. . . ."[64] Now, of course, music and the fine arts find their place in the

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[60] Quoted in Woody, *Liberal Education,* 53 *ff.*

[61] See, for example, Minutes of Trustees, March 10, 1761, I, 131 *ff.,* College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia.

[62] Fred Leonard, *A Guide to the History of Physical Education* (Philadelphia, 1923), 290 *ff.;* Deobold B. VanDalen, Elmer D. Mitchell, and Bruce L. Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education* (New York, 1953), 373 *f.*

[63] See, among others, Minutes of Faculty, October 30, 1890, p. 32, Western University of Pennsylvania (University of Pittsburgh); *Catalogue,* 1892–93, pp. 36–39, Washington and Jefferson College; *Catalogue,* 1896–97, p. 33, Allegheny College.

[64] Minutes of Trustees, February 3, 1875, XI, 275, University of Pennsylvania.

college program, and are accorded the prestige in the higher learning that was reserved in the past for the time honored disciplines.

What conclusions can be reached as a result of our examination of the past and our knowledge of current practice? This much can be said: the colleges of the country are unanimously agreed that the study of English belongs in the liberal arts program. But beyond this point unanimity ceases. For those who would seek a discernible pattern to which could be attached the label "liberal education," the study of the curricular offerings of American institutions of higher education must prove frustrating. Now, "as in Aristotle's time, there is little agreement as to what a liberal education should be."[65]

Clearly the ancient Grecian conception of the term as that education worthy of a free man, excluding slaves, women, and those who suffer the sweat of honest toil, no longer obtains. For, nearly everyone is free, nearly everyone toils, and even women are conceded to have the right, the mental acuity, and the penetrating depth of analysis prerequisite to the pursuit of the higher learning, rights and attributes hitherto considered the exclusive possessions of men. Furthermore, it is equally clear that the nineteenth century view of the matter, based as it was on the ancient languages and mathematics, no longer holds. Greek has disappeared entirely from the curriculum as a required study; and it is the rare institution that demands Latin as a prerequisite for graduation. Almost equally unique is the college which makes the study of mathematics obligatory in its arts program. In fact, it is entirely possible for a student to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree from an accredited institution of higher education without including in his program either an ancient or modern language, or mathematics.[66]

The variation in conception of what should properly constitute

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[65] Woody, *Liberal Education,* 222.

[66] *Catalogue,* 1951–52, p. 49, Lycoming College; *Catalogue,* 1950–52, p. 12, Mercyhurst College; *Catalogue,* 1951–52, p. 30, Wilson College.

a liberal arts curriculum is characteristic not only of colleges espousing differing religious views, but also of institutions professing the same faith. There are a few Catholic colleges which require the study of Latin and mathematics.[67] Contrariwise, there are Catholic institutions which demand neither a language nor mathematics for the Bachelor of Arts degree. This is also true of colleges devoted to Protestantism.[68]

Nor is there agreement as to the nature of the content, aside from specific disciplines, or as to the organization of the liberal arts curriculum. There are colleges that offer only one degree, the Bachelor of Arts degree, irrespective of the student's major area of concentration.[69] On the other hand there are institutions that make a distinction between the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science programs, depending usually, but not always, upon the quantitative distribution of science in the curriculum, or the vocational objective of the student.[70]

It is fruitless, then, to attempt a definition of liberal arts based upon the curricular offerings of the colleges and universities. The areas encompassed by the term, as revealed in practice, leave virtually no aspect of life untouched. In fact, suspicion is mounting that the term as currently employed is a misnomer. If, however, one insists upon a definition in mid-twentieth century, liberal arts may be so designated, regardless of whether they include the cultural, the scientific, the vocational, or a combination of these, so long as their pursuit frees the individual to develop as his inclinations and his capacities may direct.

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[67] *Cf. Catalogue,* 1951–52, p. 19, Chestnut Hill College; *Catalogue,* 1951–52, p. 44, University of Scranton; *Catalogue,* 1951–52, Marywood College.

[68] See note 66.

[69] *Catalogue,* 1949–50, pp. 36–51, Washington and Jefferson College.

[70] *Cf. Catalogue,* 1950–51, pp. 50 *ff.,* Thiel College; *Catalogue,* 1950–51, pp. 35 *ff.,* Westminster College; *Catalogue,* 1950–51, pp. 39 *ff.,* Wilkes College.

The FREE *or* NOT SO FREE, AIR *of* PENNSYLVANIA

IRVING BRANT

February 8, 1964

Irving Brant

Author of the six-volume biography of James Madison, the monumental and definitive achievement of two decades, 1941 to 1961, Dr. Brant came to Carlisle from the University of Virginia, where he was then Visiting Scholar in History and Political Science. His lecture reflects his primary concern at that time with civil liberties and the Bill of Rights. His JAMES MADISON AND AMERICAN NATIONALISM *was published three years later, 1967. His other works include* DOLLARS AND SENSE, *1933,* STORM OVER THE CONSTITUTION, *1936, and* THE ROAD TO PEACE AND FREEDOM, *1943.*

The FREE *or* NOT SO FREE, AIR *of* PENNSYLVANIA

WHEN James Madison, during his tenure of the White House, undertook to supervise the education of his nephew Robert Madison, the young man was sent in 1813 to Dickinson College. President Madison himself in 1769 had gone to Princeton, then called the College of New Jersey, entering it twenty-three years after the school was established. The choice of Carlisle for his nephew raises an interesting speculation. If Dickinson College had opened its doors in the early part of the eighteenth century, instead of near its close, it seems not unlikely that it would have numbered the fourth President of the United States among its distinguished alumni.

The actual choice for Madison lay between the Presbyterian College of New Jersey and the Episcopalian College of William and Mary. Religion entered into the choice but creed did not. The Presbyterian college was in revolt against the presbytery; the Episcopalian college was working to set up an American episcopate. James Madison senior, an Anglican vestryman, had no wish to be ruled by a bishop and his son went far beyond him in hostility to all ecclesiastical authority. On these points, and on

healthful climate, Carlisle would have scored as high in 1813 as Princeton did in 1769 and in addition it had the advantage of easy access from the Piedmont region of Virginia.

From James Madison's point of view, Dr. John Witherspoon was Princeton, and in 1813 Dr. Thomas Cooper was Dickinson. Madison was decidedly closer to Cooper's radicalism than to the conservative side of Witherspoon's mixed personality. So, with nephew Robert Madison as the tangible link, I wonder if it would not be in order for Dickinson College to draw President Madison within its orbit by investing him with the posthumous degree of Doctor of Laws. After all, it was only a year or two ago that Congress passed an act admitting the State of Ohio into the Union.

On his way to enter the College of New Jersey in 1769, Madison traveled on horseback through eastern Pennsylvania. The great distance from home, 300 miles, kept him at Princeton throughout the two years he required for a four-year course, and six months spent in graduate studies. On his way back to Virginia in 1772, he stopped for some time at the home of William Bradford, the noted Philadelphia publisher, whose eighteen-year-old son William was a member of that year's graduating class at Princeton. Madison at that time could fairly say, "Many of my best friends are Pennsylvanians."

Toward young William Bradford the elderly Virginian—Madison was then twenty-one—was a sort of literary and philosophical adviser. During the next four years, until both were drawn into the activities of the American Revolution, they maintained a continual exchange of letters. They wrote less frequently for another four years, until Madison's entry into the Continental Congress put them in the same city. Here, apparently, there was no renewal of their former intimacy. Divergent occupations and, it seems likely, diverging political views were responsible for that.

In college, Madison had a probably closer tie with Hugh Henry Brackenridge, later a trustee of Dickinson College. Their communion of spirit endured, but their correspondence lagged

and ceased. Their letters had a perverse way of lying unsent for lack of transport or of being lost in the mails. Early in 1774, Madison laid plans for a northern trip. He wrote to Bradford in January:

> When you have an opportunity and write to Mr. Brackenridge pray tell him I often think of him and long to see him and am resolved to do so in the spring. . . . I have a most insatiable desire to see you all.

This was not a mere nostalgic wish to renew college associations. For two years Madison had been continuing his studies at home, with special emphasis upon the study of public law. Apart from these studies his thoughts were upon the European world, moving painfully into political and social change; upon the developing tension between the American colonies and England; and upon distressing denials of religious liberty in his own neighborhood. The young Virginian wrote that he envied Bradford, who lived at the fountainhead of political and literary intelligence, while he himself was in an obscure corner. But it was not the obscurity and isolation that bothered him in 1774. It was the sad condition of the Old Dominion compared with Pennsylvania. Madison wrote to Bradford:

> I want again to breathe your free air. I expect it will mend my constitution and confirm my principles. I have indeed as good an atmosphere at home as the climate will allow: but have nothing to brag of as to the state and liberty of my country.

Madison described the condition of affairs in Virginia:

> Poverty and luxury prevail among all sorts: Pride, ignorance and knavery among the priesthood and vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough. But it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical hell conceived principle of persecution rages among some and to their eternal infamy the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such business.

At the time he was writing, said Madison, five or six well-meaning men were in jail in neighboring Culpeper County for publishing their religious sentiments, which were in the main very orthodox. He went on:

> I have neither patience to hear, talk or think of any thing relative to this matter, for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed so long about it, to so little purpose that I am without common patience. So I leave you to pity me and pray for liberty of conscience to revive among us.

In this same letter Madison congratulated Bradford on the "heroic proceedings in Philadelphia with regard to the tea." And he added: "I wish Boston may conduct matters with as much discretion as they seem to do with boldness." The patriots of Boston were somewhat indiscreet it appeared, in resisting Parliament's tax on tea by throwing a shipload of the aromatic stuff into the sea. Equally heroic Philadelphia, mixing valor with discretion, got the same results without a resort to destructive violence. All that the patriots did in the city of brotherly love and peaceful coexistence was put a handbill before the eyes of Captain Ayers of the teaship *Polly* with this suggestive inscription on it:

> What think you *Captain* of a halter around your neck, ten gallons of liquid tar decanted on your pate with the feathers of a dozen wild geese laid over that to enhance your appearance?

The captain, his cargo still on board, lifted anchor on the next ebb tide. I don't know whether this could be called Quaker thrift or Dickinsonian moderation. It accomplished its purpose without contaminating the Delaware River, without violating the sanctity of private property, without depleting a tar barrel or tearing up a single feather pillow.

But on that matter of boldness versus discretion: Madison did not reprobate the boldness of the Bostonians. Great trials, he wrote, had been put upon the people of Massachusetts by the obdurate

conduct of the royal governor and his subserviency to the British ministry. Political contests, said Madison, were necessary sometimes, as well as military, "to afford exercise and practice and to instruct in the art of defending liberty and property." Liberty and property! We may conclude, from this linking of them, that the destruction of a shipload of tea was not an assault on property but a defense of it. That feeling no doubt was stronger in Boston than in Philadelphia, but the shout, "Liberty and Property" could be heard almost anywhere on the continent, as men gathered to make ashes or watery flotsam out of objects of monetary value that had lost their status as property.

Madison saw ultimate value to all America in the assaults that were being made on liberty, especially in Boston, by Parliament and King. These assaults would stir resistance everywhere—a result made possible by another circumstance in which America was fortunate. The people of the continent were not held in the oppressive grasp of an ecclesiastical monopoly. Said he to Bradford:

> If the Church of England had been the established and general religion in all the northern colonies as it has been among us, and uninterrupted tranquility had prevailed throughout the Continent, it is clear to me that slavery and subjection might and would have been gradually insinuated among us. Union of religious sentiments begets a surprising confidence, and ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitate the execution of mischievous projects.

Obviously, Madison held Virginia's church establishment responsible in large part for the evils he had listed to Bradford—poverty, luxury, pride, ignorance, knavery, vice, wickedness, and "that hell conceived principle of persecution" for dissent. Bradford accepted his friend's appraisal of Virginia and emphatically endorsed his praise of Pennsylvania.

> The description you give of your country, *he wrote,* makes me more

in love with mine. Indeed I have ever looked on America as the land of freedom, when compared with the rest of the world, but when compared with the rest of America 'tis Pennsylvania that is so. Persecution is a weed that grows not in our happy soil.

No person, as far as Bradford could remember, had ever been imprisoned for his religious sentiments, however heretical or unepiscopal they might be. He quoted from the recently published letters of Caspipina—the pseudonym of the Rev. Jacob Duché of Philadelphia: "Liberty is the genius of Pennsylvania; and its inhabitants think, speak and act with a freedom unknown—." The remainder of the sentence is lost, for Bradford did not copy it into his letterbook. But this is what Dr. Duché wrote:

> Liberty, dear Charles, is the genius of Pennsylvania. Its inhabitants think, and speak, and act from her immediate inspiration. The poorest laborer upon the shore of Delaware, thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiments in matters of religion or politics with as much freedom as the gentleman or the scholar. Indeed, there is less distinction among the citizens of Philadelphia, than among those of any civilized city in the world.

Madison resumed the subject of freedom of religion in his next letter. The Baptists and Presbyterians, he heard, intended to appeal to the Virginia Assembly for freedom to preach and practice their religion. He predicted the move would fail because the people of wealth and social position were adherents of the persecuting Anglican sect.

> The sentiments of our people of fortune and fashion on this subject, *wrote Madison,* are vastly different from what you have been used to. That liberal catholic and equitable way of thinking as to the rights of conscience, which is one of the characteristics of a free people and so strongly marks the people of your province, is but little known among the zealous adherents to our hierarchy.

In addition, he said, the clergy were a numerous and powerful body, and had great influence because of their connection with the

Church and Crown in England. They looked upon dissenters as their natural enemies, who by robbing them of the good will of the people, would endanger their livings and security. Contrasting this with the blessings derived from freedom of conscience, Madison continued:

> You are happy in dwelling in a land where those inestimable privileges are fully enjoyed; and the public has long felt the good effects of their religious as well as civil liberty. Foreigners have been encouraged to settle among you. Industry and virtue have been promoted by mutual emulation and mutual inspection; commerce and the arts have flourished and I cannot help attributing those continual exertions of genius which appear among you to the inspiration of liberty and that love of fame and knowledge which always accompanies it.

All these blessings were lost, Madison believed, where freedom of conscience did not exist, because "Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind, and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect.

In their exchanges, Bradford mentioned that he was enlarging his previously neglected study of English history, starting with the standard work of David Hume. Madison, applauding his friend's decision, gave a clear indication of his own approach to what was every expanded prospect."

> I am pleased that you are going to converse with the Edwards and Henrys and Charles etc. etc. who have swayed the British sceptre though I believe you will find them dirty and unprofitable companions unless you will glean instruction from their follies and fall more in love with liberty by beholding such detestable pictures of tyranny and cruelty.

That remark has extraordinary significance, coming from one who was soon to win renown as the father of the Constitution and author of its libertarian first ten amendments. It reveals that Madison thought of English history primarily in domestic terms, as a struggle between liberty and tyranny, and he focused his at-

tention on periods when tyranny was triumphant. For him, English history provided a warning to America rather than a model to be followed.

Madison's feeling on this subject, and on the related one of religious liberty, was given more pointed expression a year later, when he commented to Bradford on Virginia's reaction to an anonymous pamphlet which both young men correctly ascribed to Charles Lee. Stirred up by the Tory pamphlet of an Anglican clergyman, Lee turned his answering guns on the high ecclesiastics of that sect, charging them in mass with proclivities to falsehood, persecution and zeal for arbitrary power. He then put a degree of hyperbole into the unity of American feeling against the English kings who stood highest in the secular history of repression. Wrote Lee, a native of England:

> I believe there are at least ninety-nine Americans in a hundred, who think that Charles the First was an execrable tyrant; that he met with no harder fate than he deserved; and that his two sons [Charles the Second and James the Second] ought, in justice, to have met the same exit [from this earth].

Reprinted by a Virginia newspaper, Lee's attack gained wide attention in that Anglican stronghold. Madison commented on the pamphlet:

> It has much spirit and vivacity and contains some very sensible remarks. Some of our old bigots did not altogether approve the strictures on the clergy and King Charles; but it was generally, nay with this exception, universally applauded.

At the time that was written, only one month before the rattle of musketry at Lexington and Concord, abstract principles of personal liberty were bending sharply before the emotional blasts of approaching revolution. But Madison's willingness to have three royal heads chopped off fits perfectly into his earlier remarks on the Stuart regime of tyranny and cruelty. His remark about "our old

bigots" accords no less with his discussion of religious freedom. And it all harmonizes with his praise of the people of Philadelphia and Boston for their resistance to royal governors and parliamentary oppressors.

The effect of this, in its bearing on American constitutional development, is to broaden the concept of liberty to include relief from every form of tyranny and cruelty by which the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts held down the people of England. It stamps American institutions of government, to the extent that Madison molded them, not as a blanket transplantation of British institutions to the new world, but as a blending of ancient rights with safeguards against ancient wrongs. American institutions of government were designed to protect the people against the monarchic and autocratic system in which temporal government, aiding or aided by the established church, met every assertion of natural human rights with the hangman's noose, the dungeon, the pillory and the whipping block.

Madison was both philosopher and prophet when he said that political contests were sometimes as necessary as military contests, to afford practice and instruction in the art of defending liberty. The American Revolution furnished the military exercise in defense of freedom, even though, as always in civil war, there were denials of freedom in the course of defending it. The political exercise in its defense was in the establishing of new governments. And unless William Bradford hit wide of the mark, Pennsylvania was to America what America was to the world, in the recognition of personal liberty as the natural right of human beings.

How far back in the history of Pennsylvania can this spirit of liberty be traced? Certainly it was well developed by 1735, when the Philadelphia lawyer Andrew Hamilton went to New York to conduct, without a fee, the successful defense of John Peter Zenger, in the most famous of American cases involving freedom of the press. When 17-year-old Benjamin Franklin shifted his residence from Boston to Philadelphia in 1723, he was deliberately

moving from both governmental and family tyranny into freedom. Benjamin had been cruelly mistreated by his elder brother, the publisher of the *New England Courant,* to whom he was apprenticed. But when his brother was imprisoned for satirizing the Massachusetts Assembly, young Benjamin risked jail himself by printing these words in the *Courant:* "Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech; a thing terrible to public traitors." For the sixty-seven years after he became a Philadelphian, Franklin lived up to what he had written about himself at the age of sixteen, that he was a "mortal enemy to arbitrary government and arbitrary power."

The free air of Pennsylvania was in motion long before the days of Franklin; in fact, before there was a Pennsylvania. A strong whiff of it, or better say a spanking breeze, was in the sails of the ship that carried the founder of the province from England to the new world. I refer to the great stir created by the trial of William Penn and William Mead at the Old Bailey in London, in September 1670. The charge against them was tumultuous assembly, but the actual offense was the peaceable preaching of a Quaker sermon in the street after Penn was forbidden to preach in his meeting house. He brought with him to America his own published account of their trial, a pamphlet entitled "The People's Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted." The spirit of this invocation of human rights, this advance breath of the free air of a future Pennsylvania, may be sensed in the preface addressed by Penn "To the English Reader." It contained these introductory words of exhortation:

> Oh, what monstrous, and illegal proceedings are these? . . . When all pleas for liberty are esteemed sedition, and the laws, that give, and maintain them, so many insignificant pieces of formality. And what do they less than plainly tell us so, who at will and pleasure break open our locks, rob our houses, raze their foundations, imprison our persons, and finally deny us justice to our relief; as if they acted most like christian men, when they were most barbarous, in running such, as really are so.

That was English justice under Charles the Second, a Stuart king. Under this system, said William Penn without overstatement, "Liberty of conscience is counted a pretense for rebellion, and religious assemblies, routs and riots." Yet was that very much worse than the situation in Culpeper County, Virginia, as described by Madison a century later? In both places, the natural right to proclaim a new religious creed was construed into riot and rebellion. In each instance, there was a detestable picture of tyranny and cruelty, with the fortunate counter-effect of making some people fall more in love with liberty by beholding its opposite. At the Old Bailey, in 1670, Penn and Mead denied the existence of any statute or anything in the common law that made their actions a crime. They challenged the crown lawyers and the judges to produce such a law. The answer of the court was to clap both men into the bail-dock and go on with the trial in their absence, though within their hearing. As he was being led away, Penn appealed to the jury in these words:

> Must I therefore be taken away because I plead for the fundamental laws of England? However, this I leave upon your consciences, who are of the jury (and my sole judges) that if these ancient fundamental laws, which relate to liberty and property . . . must not be indispensably maintained, who can say he hath right to the coat upon his back?

Observe the words "liberty and property," linked by Penn twenty years before John Locke united them, a hundred years before they entered the vocabulary of the American Revolution.

After Penn was taken out, William Mead attempted to carry on, but at his first words he too was put in the bail-dock, followed by the remark of the presiding judge: "You deserve to have your tongue cut out." So, without either man being allowed to present a witness or even to argue his innocence, the case was submitted to the jury. These twelve men defied the judges and returned a verdict that was neither a conviction nor a complete acquittal.

They found Penn and Mead guilty of speaking in the street. They did not say, and refused to say, guilty of tumultuous assembly. For two days and nights, the jurors were held without food or water, while the judges pounded at them to change their verdict. They did change it at last, to a plain and final Not Guilty. The judges thereupon committed the twelve jurors to prison for contumacy. Penn and Mead were sent there too, on a trumped-up charge of contempt of court.

At that moment in English history, there was a strong popular revulsion against the control of juries by threats and penalties. In this instance, Juror Bushell applied for a writ of habeas corpus. The twelve highest judges of England unanimously granted it, and in a scathing opinion by Lord Chief Justice Vaughan, this form of tyranny was ended for all time. But William Penn, refusing out of principle to pay his fine, stayed in jail until some unknown person paid it for him. In spirit he never lost his freedom, but maintained it for himself and established it for others. When he gained proprietary rights to the wilderness that became Pennsylvania, the first principle he placed in its constitution was absolute freedom for all Christian sects.

The influence of the Penn-Mead trial was not limited to Quakers. The full record of the case, published in Emlyn's *State Trials* in 1730, was familiar to every well-educated American lawyer. Andrew Hamilton cited it in his defense of Zenger. James Madison had an account of it, written by Sir John Hawles, a libertarian lawyer who became Solicitor General after the Revolution of 1688. Congressman John Page of Virginia made use of the case in 1789, though not by name, in arguing the necessity of an American Bill of Rights. Not only this trial, but scores of others that served as danger signals to America, were known to federal legislators who made use of the facilities offered them by the Library Company of Philadelphia.

The turning of book leaves in that great library fanned the free air of Pennsylvania. Let us go back to the works of Caspipina:

"The poorest laboror upon the shore of Delaware, thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiments in matters of religion or politics with as much freedom as the gentleman or the scholar." It would be going too far to equate the poorest laborer with the more aspiring mechanics and artisans who dwelt on the western shore of the Delaware. But it was especially for the benefit of manual workers that Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Hamilton and seventy-three other citizens obtained a charter in 1742 for the Library Company of Philadelphia. Their purpose was to give poorer people the same educational opportunities that the wealthy obtained in college. But instead of the emphasis on theology that characterized the college libraries of that period, the Philadelphia institution laid its stress on history, science, law and liberty. For thirty years Benjamin Franklin and his London friend, Peter Collinson, worked together to build up the library. The idea was taken up in other cities. The purpose and the achievement were both set forth by Franklin's young friend, Dr. Henry Stueber, in his biographical continuation of Franklin's *Autobiography:*

> This will be the best security for maintaining our liberties. A nation of well-informed men, who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them, cannot be enslaved. It is in the region of ignorance that tyranny begins.

In this Philadelphia library, a highly useful eighteenth-century wagonmaker could satisfy his ambition to become a lawyer more or less useful. But if the contents of the library governed his use of talents, he would not become the kind of lawyer who would slit the nose of the goddess of justice or put the spirit of freedom into the pillory.

Any person using that library in 1787, be he a wagonmaker or a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, would find it a manual of the eternal battle for human freedom. He would have before him Emlyn's *State Trials* and their continuation—ten folio volumes describing the judicial crimes committed in England during the

dynasties that built the record of tyranny and cruelty. He could choose between Hale's *Pleas of the Crown* and Hawkins' work of the same title and same material but contrary spirit—Lord Chief Justice Hale trying to stir his readers to the injustices that passed for law, Sergeant Hawkins slavishly accepting the iniquitous precedents of the Court of Star Chamber and passing them off as the common law of England. If the *State Trials* were in too great demand, a dozen wagonmakers or convention delegates could work on the same material, scattered through the Library Company's great pamphlet collection of English trials.

I looked recently to see how many of these pamphlets were published before 1780, and therefore were certainly available to the members of the Continental Congress who made such extensive use of this library. There are sixty-three of these early pamphlets, nearly all of famous cases, and all but five of English origin. Here, at this formative period of our government, was the infamous record of perjured swearing and judicial murder that goes by the name of the Popish Plot. Here was the conviction of the Earl of Strafford by bill of attainder, which helped give Americans a horror of that instrument of arbitrary power. Here were the stories of Penn and Mead, of free-born John Lilburne, of Algernon Sidney—men and martyrs whose bold stands for freedom of opinion put the brand of infamy on those who denied it. Here was the Case of the Seven Bishops, accused and acquitted of libeling the king—a case that stirred the spark of freedom into a flame that swept England into the Revolution of 1688. And here were the later cases that showed how the Glorious Revolution sank into the tyranny of Hanoverian kings.

But the free air of Pennsylvania did not always flow in a steady stream. Less than twenty years after the ordeal at the Old Bailey, and during one of William Penn's periodic returns to England, pioneer printer William Bradford, great-grandfather of Madison's friend, published a pamphlet for a dissident Quaker. Provincial Governor Blackwell ordered him tried for seditious libel. The jury

disagreed, but Bradford was held in jail for a year, supposedly awaiting a second trial. He was set free by the governor of New York, to whom the British Crown transferred the governorship of Pennsylvania. Penn soon regained control, and there were no more such prosecutions during the eighty years in which his family retained proprietary rights.

During that period, the liberal policies of Pennsylvania brought an influx of European refugees, mostly Germans who settled in the eastern counties, and Scotch-Irish who followed the curving intermountain valleys into the unpeopled West. Here, cut off by mountain ridges from the rich and cultured East, these hardy mountaineers raised their crops of corn, pigs and children. They converted bulky corn into whisky that served as money, and lived with the independence that some city dwellers yearned for and others classed as anarchy.

Class lines hardened as Pennsylvania grew more prosperous. Quakers divided on the issue of revolution by gunfire, and the anti-military wing had a rough time of it. Wealthy merchants feared the city mechanics who mixed in politics, and feared and despised the half-civilized mountaineers. The conservative faction controlled the courts, and the judges modeled their conduct on the British judiciary, which was identified with the repressive domestic policies of George the Third. Thus a paradoxical situation developed. In the political conflict with England, all who were identified as patriots, including mercantile leaders, conservative lawyers, radical-minded artisans and leather-shirted farmers—these all stood together in support of liberty *and* property against the interferences of Parliament and King. Yet these same groups came into fierce contention with each other—liberty *against* property—in the domestic politics of Pennsylvania, raising factionalism to an intensity unequaled elsewhere on the continent. Thus there were in effect two revolutionary movements, one for national independence, the other reminiscent of the political and social conflict in England.

For some years the effect of this was not fully manifest. In 1776, Pennsylvania adopted an ultra-liberal constitution. Nationally, every formative step in government tended to establish the liberty of all free Americans. The federal Constitution of 1787 established democratic self government, guaranteed trial by jury, maintained the writ of habeas corpus, limited narrowly the crime of treason, and prohibited bills of attainder and *ex post facto* laws. But a large gap was left by the failure to safeguard numerous basic personal liberties. A nationwide demand led to the adoption of the first ten amendments, drafted by Madison in 1789 and commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights.

The First Amendment commands that Congress shall make no law denying or abridging freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or freedom of assembly. Other amendments prohibit a long array of specific evils in criminal prosecutions, including one guarantee that has been much on the tongue in recent years. No person shall be compelled, in any criminal case, to be a witness against himself.

In our legal system, even the clearest, plainest words have no meaning until they are clarified, or further obscured, by judicial interpretation. And so it has been with the Bill of Rights. Madison in presenting his amendments told Congress that the federal judiciary would be an impregnable bulwark against every encroachment upon the rights thus guaranteed. So it might have been, had the political and social tranquility of 1789 been long lasting. But that year witnessed the beginning of the French Revolution, which upset American minds as drastically as the Russian Revolution has done in our own day. Three years of turmoil in France converted a libertarian uprising into a violent social upheaval. The "Reign of Terror" in France spread a wave of terror among the propertied classes of England and the United States.

In Pennsylvania, the old political cleavage intensified a new one, which separated the people into Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans. It was a division unrelated to the French

Revolution yet roughly corresponding to the American attitude toward it. Into the language of politics there soon crept a new and sinister word, the awful adjective "democratic." Used by Federalists, that word was interchangeable with "Jacobin," the party appellation of French Communists.

The Republicans at first repelled the smear word thrown at them. Then, in Pennsylvania, they defiantly adopted it and began to form Democratic Societies. It is hard to understand, today, the terror inspired by Pennsylvania's Democratic Societies, especially when one observes that the constitution of the first society was written by Alexander J. Dallas, for many years a leader of the Philadelphia bar. Later, Dallas was President Madison's Secretary of the Treasury and principal architect of the second Bank of the United States, which became in time the black beast of Jacksonian Democracy. But in the 1790's, the epithet "democratic" had a fearsomeness not exceeded by Senator McCarthy's shout of "card-carrying Communist," at the apex of his late dictatorship over Congress and public opinion.

It was in such an atmosphere, charged with fear and passion, that the mountain farmers of western Pennsylvania rose up in their Whisky Rebellion against a federal tax on corn juice. Taken by itself, the excise was not confiscatory. But consider the situation of an Alleghany County farmer whose only money was whisky made from his corn. In practical effect he had two income taxes to pay, one the charge made by the distiller, the other paid to the excise man. Combined, they added up to a $300 income tax on a $600 corn crop. The farmer could not escape the distiller, but he could get out the rifle he carried in the American Revolution and shake it in the face of the tax collector. That is what he did, burning also a house or two and it was called treason against the nation he had helped to create.

Treasury Secretary Hamilton induced President Washington to send fifteen thousand soldiers to save the country from these tools of Robespierre. They found no insurrectionists, because Hugh

Brackenridge and other influential political leaders had persuaded the extremists to go home. But somebody had to suffer, so two obscure farmers were tried for treason and sentenced to death, but were pardoned by the President. And if Alexander Hamilton could have had his way, Dickinson College would have lost one of its future trustees.

Hugh Brackenridge, Albert Gallatin, and Congressman Smilie and Findley put an end to the uprising by persuasion, before the troops were ordered west. After that, they tried to moderate the punitive measures. All four of them, in the recorded opinion of Secretary Hamilton, deserved to be tried for treason, and he called Brackenridge the worst scoundrel of the lot. To Rufus King, Hamilton wrote from his military headquarters:

> This business must not be skinned over. The political putrefaction of Pennsylvania is greater than I had any idea of.

It was not putrefaction. The revolting farmers had violated the law, defied the government, destroyed property. They were insurrectionists to the same extent, and no further, than were Milo Reno and his Iowa farmers, who reared up in 1932 against low corn prices and high mortgage foreclosures. But it was not the actual uprising of the Pennsylvania mountaineers that disturbed the Federalists. They saw the shadow of an impending upset in American politics, dedicated to new ideas of political equality. What Hamilton called putrefaction was a blast—too pungent and stormy a blast—of the free air of Pennsylvania.

The political motive for sending fifteen thousand soldiers, to suppress a few hundred farmers who were known to have gone home, was speedily disclosed in Congress. The insurrection was to be blamed on the Democratic Societies, and through them on Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, and other leaders of the Republican party. Federalist Congressman Fitzsimons of Philadelphia offered a resolution accusing "certain self-created societies" of having stimulated and urged the insurrection. Madison led the opposition

to the motion. This, he told Congress, was an attack on men for their opinions, not for their actions. Opinions were not an object of legislation. Conduct innocent in the eyes of the law could not be the object of legislative censure.

> It is in vain to say, *Madison went on,* that this indiscriminate censure is no punishment. If it falls on classes, or individuals, it will be a severe punishment. . . . Is not this proposition, if voted, a vote of attainder?

Apply that reasoning, today, to the work of our congressional investigating committees, and it marks them as wholesale violators of the constitutional prohibition against bills of attainder. The resolution denouncing the Democratic Societies was defeated, and so was its author when he ran for re-election in Philadelphia.

Nevertheless, the drift into folly continued. The resolution defeated in 1794 pointed the way to the crowning piece of Federalist insanity, passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. That too was a product of hysteria over the French Revolution, combined with Federalist fear of a triumph of what was soon to be called Jeffersonian Democracy.

The Sedition Act made it a crime to write or publish any false, scandalous and malicious statement about the government, Congress or the President, with intent to bring them into disrepute. The law threw a sop to justice by stating that truth could be offered as a justification, and that the jury should have the right to pass on that question, under the direction of the judges. But how would truth or falsity actually be determined, when every judge was a Federalist, every juror was selected by a Federalist marshal appointed by the Federalist President, and the basic crime was the attempt to bring a Federalist administration into disrepute.

The Sedition Act had been in force two years, with a monstrous record of political repression and injustice, before it reached a climax in Pennsylvania in the trial of Dr. Thomas Cooper. Cooper, not yet professor of law, philosophy, chemistry and medi-

cine at Dickinson College, had previously stirred the anger of the Adams administration as editor of a pro-Jefferson newspaper at Sunbury, Pennsylvania. An editorial, giving a recipe for building up executive power, hit so close to governmental policies that Adams recommended Cooper's prosecution under the Sedition Act. Instead, on discovery that soon after coming from England he had applied for a federal office, it was decided to calumniate him as a disappointed turncoat. That stirred Cooper to enter the controversy then raging over the President's decision that a seaman, Jonathan Robbins, who claimed to be a native American, should be turned over to the British government as a naval deserter. Or, as Cooper termed it, delivered to "the mock trial of a British court martial." For those words Cooper was indicted by a Federal grand jury in Philadelphia for seditious libel of the President. He was tried by a vindictive judge before a packed jury, convicted and imprisoned. The court proceedings would have destroyed liberty forever if they had been accepted and followed as a permanent pattern. But Cooper walked out of prison, six months later, into wild celebrations by the Democratic Republicans of Philadelphia. The Federalist party walked into a presidential election and a defeat that was the prelude to oblivion.

All of these convictions for publication of ordinary, well-spiced political opinions were obtained in the face of the constitutional command that "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press." During the debate in Congress on the sedition bill, Gallatin of Pennsylvania and John Nicholas of Virginia led the Republicans in denouncing it as a violation of the First Amendment. After it became a law, Jefferson and Madison wrote the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798, assailing its constitutionality. Madison followed with his long and fundamental Report of 1800, adopted by the Virginia legislature, denying utterly the power of the federal government to punish for seditious libel, either by statute or by an assumed transplantation of the common law of England.

The constitutionality of the Sedition Act never was submitted to the Supreme Court, but its most enthusiastic enforcers were individual members of that court riding circuit. True, reasoned these justices, Congress was forbidden to abridge the freedom of the press, but Blackstone had defined freedom of the press as meaning nothing more than freedom from prior restraint. In the absence of a licensing system, said the English commentator, any person could publish what he pleased, but if what he published offended the law, he was to be punished for his temerity.

Measured by long-term effect, the most damaging presentation of the Blackstone doctrine was made by Supreme Court Justice Iredell before a Philadelphia grand jury in 1799. It was offered, not in a sedition case, but as an explosion of feeling over Iredell's failure to send Congressman Cabell of Virginia to prison for assailing the Adams administration in a letter to his constituents. Iredell did secure an indictment of Cabell, but a mighty blast from the Virginia legislature blew the paper halfway across the Atlantic Ocean.

So now Iredell elucidated the Sedition Act while asking a Philadelphia grand jury to indict for treason the poor German farmer Jacob Fries, who was mixed up in a new burst of farmer opposition to federal taxes. (Fries was sentenced to death for treason, but pardoned.) Today, the Blackstone-Iredell definition of freedom of the press, as nothing but freedom from a licensing system, seems too absurd for comment. Yet it was formally approved by the Supreme Court in 1907. And, believe it or not, the opinion was written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who in 1917 began a step-by-step retraction that ultimately became complete.

The Blackstone definition, Iredell argued in 1799, "could scarcely be unknown to those who framed the amendments to the Constitution," so presumably it was satisfactory to them. Even if they had never heard of it, he added, they must have agreed with

it; otherwise they would have worded the amendment to guard against such a meaning.

Undoubtedly the farmers had heard of Blackstone's definition. What else did Madison have in mind when he told Congress that freedom of the press, one of the choicest privileges of the American people, was unguarded in the British Constitution? And strange is the reasoning process of any person who can find acquiescence to the Blackstone definition in Madison's exhortation to Congress to give Americans complete protection of the freedoms found in the First Amendment: "It is proper that every government should be disarmed of powers which trench upon those rights." If the Sedition Act did not trench upon freedom of the press, you can fire a cannonball through a man's stomach without trenching upon his right to live. That goes too for the "balancing test" that has been developed by the courts in the last thirty years, as a substitute for the discredited Blackstone definition.

Seditious libel laws, it is now admitted, *do* abridge the freedom of the press. Do they, then, not violate the command: "Congress shall make no law" abridging that freedom? No, say the advocates of the "balancing test," because the words "Congress shall make no law" do not mean, Congress shall make no law. They mean: "Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of the press, unless, on balance, Congress sees more reason for making such a law than for not making it." Was that what Madison had in mind when he said in 1789 that every government should be *disarmed* of powers that *trench upon* the freedom of the press?

Madison's famous 1800 Report to the Virginia Assembly, which has become the classic refutation of the power of Congress to punish for seditious libel, was in effect a documentation of what he said in Congress when he submitted the ten amendments. Among those who endorsed Madison's argument most heartily was John Dickinson, who wrote to Jefferson: "It is an inestimable contribution to the cause of liberty."

The sudden affiliation of the conservative lawyer John Dickin-

son with Jeffersonian Democracy, after his lengthy Federalist connections, has been a source of bewilderment to historians and biographers. How could this man of wealth and social position, so fearful in 1787 of the future power of the masses without property—how could this cultured aristocrat unite in mind and spirit with the Jeffersonian mob that terrified the goodly rich and horrified the richly good? It has been suggested that the cause lay in Dickinson's Quaker inclination and associations, particularly his zeal for peace, which put him deeply in odds with the Adams administration in its quasi-war with France. No doubt that was an important influence, but many Quaker pacifists maintained their Federalist affiliation without discernible qualms. And surely, in Dickinson's case, so narrow and transient a cause would have tinged the transfer with some symptoms of regret.

There were, I believe, more impelling reasons for his dramatic change of position. Go back to 1754, when 22-year-old Dickinson was studying law in London's Inner Temple. The ancient court rooms, he wrote to his father, carried him back to the days when "a Hampden, and a Holt opposed encroaching power, and supported declining justice." Those words alone, if Dickinson remained true to their implications, were enough to tear him free of the political party that in 1798 perverted the Constitution of the United States into a positive instrument of encroaching power and declining justice.

No person capable of advocating or approving the Sedition Act of 1798, or of remaining in the political party that enacted it, would have gone back to Lord Chief Justice Holt for a figure to admire and emulate. It was Holt who, in a brief interlude between tyrannies, rescued English courts from the excesses of seditious libel as they had developed in the Star Chamber and under the infamous Stuart judges, Scroggs and Jeffreys. Dickinson, like Madison at the same age, recoiled from this detestable picture of monarchic tyranny and cruelty.

Had young Dickinson contained the makings of a true Federal-

ist, of the type that gave us the Sedition Act, he would have written to his father that he was in the rooms sanctified by the memory of Lord Chief Justice Raymond, who rescued English law —if rescue is the proper word—rescued English law from the *justice* of Holt, and restored Star Chamber *in*justice under the misnomer of common law. It was Lord Raymond who, a scant quarter century before Dickinson went to London, furnished the foundation of verbal sand and sawdust on which the cabinet of President Adams erected the Sedition Act.

For evidence of Dickinson's lifelong fidelity to principle, we need only turn again to his 1800 letter to Jefferson in which he praised Madison's dissection of a tyrannical act of Congress based on usurped authority. "How incredible was it once," wrote Dickinson, "and how astonishing is it now, that every measure and every pretence of the stupid and selfish Stuarts should be adopted by the posterity of those who fled from their madness and tyranny to the distant and dangerous wilds of America." Here, applied to the misconduct of his own government, is an emanation of the same spirit that ruled Dickinson's youth, the same spirit that made him the pamphleteer of the budding American Revolution, before it flamed from polemics into war. There too is an utterance precisely paralleling the youthful words of Madison about the detestable picture of Stuart tyranny and cruelty.

But there was something that came closer home, to account for the stand Dickinson took against the Sedition Act and the political party that inflicted it upon the country. In 1775, Dickinson drafted the so-called Olive Branch Petition to the British Crown —a final appeal of the Continental Congress for satisfaction of American grievances without a resort to war. It was criticized by more militant patriots as too mild and conciliatory, though it upheld American rights without flinching. Dickinson knew—in 1800 he could not help knowing—that every sentence in that 1775 petition, except the final words of transmittal, could have sent him to prison had the Olive Branch Petition encountered, in England,

a counterpart of the American Sedition Act of 1798 and the manner of its enforcement. But there was identity in law, identity in policy, identity in everything that counted, between the stupid and selfish Stuarts of the seventeenth century, and the selfish and stupid Americans who imitated them in 1798.

By nature, education and lifelong experience, John Dickinson was irresistibly impelled to pursue the path of civil rights and political freedom. This was the force that made him abandon the party toward which he was economically inclined. He could not follow it on the road to tyranny.

John Dickinson and James Madison were lifelong friends. When Madison accepted office as President Jefferson's Secretary of State, Dickinson wrote to him that the changes in government opened a "cheerful prospect to those who love their country; and one of the most pleasing circumstances is thy holding thy present station." One of the most pleasing circumstances to Dickinson College should be the fact that the man of noble character in whose honor it was named, and the President of the United States who held Dickinson College in such high regard, both loved the free air of Pennsylvania and did all they could to keep it free—a task and duty that is not yet finished.

BENJAMIN RUSH, AMERICA'S PHILOSOPHER *of* REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

DONALD J. D'ELIA

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Donald J. D'Elia

Associate Professor of History at the State University College, New Paltz, New York, Dr. D'Elia is one of those younger scholars concerned with the history of ideas and with an exploration of the philosophic background of the American Revolution. His studies have been focused upon Benjamin Rush in a continuing series of articles leading toward a comprehensive work. At the time of his lecture, his "The Republican Theology of Benjamin Rush" had just been published in PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY, *and "Dr. Benjamin Rush and the American Medical Revolution" in the* PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. *A study of "Benjamin Rush, David Hartley, and the Revolutionary Uses of Psychology" is to follow.*

BENJAMIN RUSH, AMERICA'S PHILOSOPHER *of* REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

IN AN enlightened age which produced Locke, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi, it was hardly unusual for other men of talents to favor the public with treatises on education; and given a political event of the magnitude of the American Revolution, the disposition to express one's own reasonable and correct opinions on education in the new Republic became irresistible. Such, in very large part, was the case with Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the founder of this College, whose educational writings were central to his program as a revolutionary. ". . . I consider it is possible," he wrote, "to convert men into republican machines. This must be done, if we expect them to perform their parts properly, in the great machine of the government of the state. That republic is sophisticated with monarchy or aristocracy that does not revolve upon the wills of the people, and these must be fitted to each other by means of education before they can be made to produce regularity and unison in government."[1]

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[1] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (2d ed., Philadelphia, T. and W. Bradford, 1806), pp. 14–15.

The distinguishing features of Rush's educational thought, applicable to his general thought as well, were Christianity and republicanism; and it is easy to ascertain the major formative influences in his early and middle years.

Mrs. Rush, his beloved mother, widowed and desperately struggling to raise her children, had early inculcated Benjamin with a respect for education, both religious and professional. She managed his education at home in Philadelphia as well as she could, and then, no doubt with great relief, sent him in 1754 to West Nottingham Academy, a preparatory school for the New Side Presbyterian ministry. There, her brother-in-law, Rev. Samuel Finley, the master of the school, ineradicably fixed in young Rush's mind the truths of Christianity, making Rush's belief in revealed religion proof against every doubt. Almost a half century later, after he had abandoned much of Finley's Calvinistic theology, he could attribute to Finley's arguments his never having a doubt as to "the divine origin of the Bible."[2] Christianity and philosophy, Finley stressed repeatedly, were in perfect correspondence. "The truths of philosophy and Christianity," Rush discovered, "dwell alike in the mind of the Deity, and reason and religion are equally the offspring of his goodness."[3] Whatever was true was Christian, and whatever was Christian was true. Reason and supernatural faith were not mutually exclusive, as the deists argued. Education, Finley said, was not divisible into religious and secular parts, but was instead one total experience relating man to God and his

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The standard biography is Nathan G. Goodman, *Benjamin Rush: Physician and Citizen, 1746–1813* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934). Bernard Bailyn does not discuss Rush in his *Education in the Forming of American Society* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1960), an important survey of early American education.

[2] George W. Corner (ed.), *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His "Travels through Life" Together with His Commonplace Book for 1789–1813*, Mem. Amer. Philos. Soc. *25* (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 31.

[3] "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations* (5th ed., 2 vols., Philadelphia, M. Carey and Son, 1818), 1: p. 123.

finite universe. And the Bible was the paramount and irrefutable source of all truth. For Rush, ever afterwards, the truth was one, however arrived at: "Like its divine author, it is an eternal unchangeable *unit*."[4]

Five years of heavily religious instruction at Nottingham to a precocious, fatherless boy, understandably left a deep mark on the forming man; and this mark was the more profound because of the special, almost filial, relationship between Rush and Finley.[5] The Log College graduate, friend of Gilbert Tennent and the even more famous George Whitefield, passed on to Rush a total religious vision of life which stayed with the man to his final days. As the mature Rush wrote in his famous "Three Lectures upon Animal Life,"—the "Being that created our world never takes his hand, nor his eye, for a single moment, from any part of it."[6]

It was at Finley's boarding school that young Rush was first

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[4] "An Enquiry into the Consistency of Oaths with Reason and Christianity," *Rush Essays*, p. 126; Rush, "Introductory Lecture to a Course of Lectures On the History & Practice of Physic," Library Company of Philadelphia, Rush MSS, call number Yi2/7400/F1, pp. 37–38. I would like to thank Edwin Wolf, 2nd, of the Library Company of Philadelphia and Nicholas B. Wainwright of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for their many kindnesses.

[5] David Ramsay, *An Eulogium upon Benjamin Rush, M.D.* (Philadelphia, Bradford and Inskeep, 1813), pp. 12–13. In a warm and colorful new biography of Rush, the distinguished American psychiatrist, Dr. Carl Binger, viewed Rush's early loss of his father as the determining event in his psychology and life, *Revolutionary Doctor: Benjamin Rush (1746–1813)* (New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1966), p. 20, *et passim.* For the Quaker influence in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia, which certainly affected Rush's thought in general —and his educational thought in particular (ideas of universal education and curriculum)—see Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682–1783* (New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1963), pp. 148–149, 207–209, *et passim,* and Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1962); chap. ii, pp. 29–69, *et passim.*

[6] *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: pp. 53–54, 47; Rush, "Lectures on Pathology," Library Company of Philadelphia, Rush MSS, call number Yi2/7396/F17, pp. 24–25.

taught Greek and Latin, subjects which confessedly possessed little attraction for him. One can guess with high probability that the evangelist schoolmaster did not overemphasize the classical languages in his curriculum, since they were after all essentially pagan languages. The ultimate purpose of education, Finley had doubtless urged, was salvation, and Greek and Latin obviously availed nothing here. Rush apparently followed his tutor on this point, judging from his polemics against classical language studies.[7] He, like his fatherly master, was essentially a practical man; and from this perspective, it was indeed difficult to justify anything more than a genteelly cursory application to the ancients in the original.

Unquestionably, Finley's New Side preacher background explained the great value attached to oral instruction at the school. An extraordinary regard for the persuasive force of eloquence, which characterized Rush his life long and almost prompted him to study law, was certainly bred in him by the inspired lectures and excellent conversations of his Nottingham days. Indeed, Rush later attached so much value to conversation that he kept elaborate records of information he collected in this way, and interspersed such facts and opinions throughout his published and unpublished writings. Even in his philosophy of animal life, published in 1799, the philosopher Rush thought so highly of conversation as to denominate it a stimulus to animal life.[8] And in his researches on the American Indian (for which, incidentally, he has not been justly credited), he revealed the savage's famed taciturnity to be

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[7] Rush to Ashbel Green?, May 22, 1807, Lyman H. Butterfield (ed.), *Letters of Benjamin Rush,* Mem. Amer. Philos. Soc. *30* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1951), 2: pp. 946–947; Rush, "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* pp. 21–56, originally published anonymously in the *American Museum* 5 (June, 1789), pp. 525–535, under a different title.

[8] "Three Lectures upon Animal Life," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 38.

[9] "An Account of the Vices Peculiar to the Indians of North America," *Rush Essays,* p. 259.

not an evidence of wisdom but an effect of dullness.[9] "It is equally true," observed Rush, "a silent man seldom possesses a clear and active mind."[10] Certainly, one does not have to search far to find the biographical sources of Rush's views on the educational value of speaking and conversing.

Practical education at Finley's school included farming, which so impressed Rush with its academic merit as both a study and a diversion as to lead him to become one of the Republic's earliest proponents of formal agricultural instruction. The extremely rural setting of the school, contrasting so vividly with a large city like Philadelphia, made him sharply aware of the advantages—which he perhaps exaggerated—of locating colleges in the provinces.[11] As a promoter of Dickinson College, Rush was able to instutionalize his belief in the excellence of rural colleges. Rush also believed that country life was healthier than city life, that, for example, the village of Carlisle would be healthier for students than Philadelphia, and in his medical writings he ingeniously discussed the salutary effects of rural odors upon the human system.[12] Morally, too, the comparison favored the provinces: "The country life is happy, chiefly because its laborious employments are favourable to virtue, and unfriendly to vice."[13] "I agree with you in your opinion of cities," Rush wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1800. "I consider them in the same light that I do abscesses on the human body,

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[10] "On the Means of Acquiring Knowledge," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures, to Courses of Lectures upon the Institutes and Practice of Medicine. . . . To Which are Added, Two Lectures upon the Pleasures of the Senses and of the Mind; with an Inquiry into Their Proximate Cause* (Philadelphia, Bradford and Innskeep, 1811), p. 349.

[11] Rush to "The Citizens of Pennsylvania of German Birth and Extraction: Proposal of a German College," August 31, 1785, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 367; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 18.

[12] "Three Lectures upon Animal Life," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 13; Rush, "Lectures On Pathology. On the Influence of Different Religions On the Health of the Body," Library Company of Philadelphia, Rush MSS, call number Yi2/7396/F23, pp. 320–321.

[13] "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 109.

viz., as reservoirs of all the impurities of a community."[14] Small wonder that Rush, in his program of revolutionary education, argued for rural colleges.

All in all, Rush's education at West Nottingham Academy was religious, hermetically religious; and although his student days at the College of New Jersey and the University of Edinburgh were freer and much more varied, his character and thought remained pervasively religious.

The College of New Jersey, like Nottingham Academy—whence it drew one of its presidents in Samuel Finley—was a New Side Presbyterian institution. Hence, the College was steeped, as was the preparatory school, in that democratic revivalism which typified the Great Awakening in the colonies, and which almost necessarily fostered education. This enthusiasm for knowledge, literary as well as religious, was personified in the College's young president, Rev. Samuel Davies, whose dedicated scholarship fortified Rush's conviction of the worth of education.

Davies, known far and wide for his missionary zeal, had earlier founded the Presbyterian Church in Virginia. In 1759 he was called to the presidency of the New Jersey College, succeeding no less a person than Jonathan Edwards, who had died soon after taking office. The new president quickly developed a special interest in Rush's aptitude for verse, composition, and public speaking. No doubt, as a pulpit orator of great distinction himself, he was quick to discern his student's rhetorical promise.[15] Davies, like Finley, was a man of humble beginnings and unpretentious education, as Rush happily realized decades later when he urged the establishment of more Log Colleges like those in which Finley and Davies

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[14] October 6, 1800, *Rush Letters*, 2: p. 824.

[15] *Autobiography*, p. 36. See Samuel Davies, *Sermons on Important Subjects, To Which Are Now Added, Three Occasional Sermons . . . Memoirs and Character of the Author and Two Sermons on Occasion of His Death, By the Rev. Drs. Gibbons and Finley* (5th ed., 3 vols., New York, T. Allen, 1792), 1, Appendix, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv.

had been trained.[16] Finley and Davies—such were the men, Rush passionately believed, who would make America righteous and great.

After the rude College of New Jersey, where Rush took his B.A. in 1760, sophisticated Edinburgh, with its new personal freedom and university character, doubtless fascinated and overawed the young Pennsylvanian. Certainly helpful in bolstering his confidence for the rigors of overseas medical study, however, were the courses in anatomy and materia medica that he had taken with Drs. Morgan and Shippen, Jr., in Philadelphia. But in "classical and philosophical learning," as Rush put it in his autobiography, the New Side scholar recognized his deficiencies and characteristically removed them by private study. Mathematics, Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian all came in for study or review while he was a medical student at Edinburgh, with German deferred until his return voyage to America.[17] The conspicuous place of modern languages, especially French and German, in Rush's scheme of revolutionary education for American youth clearly owed something to his personal experience as an American abroad. The utility of these languages and mathematics made an impression on him which he did not forget years later when he joined others in urging educational reform.

The influence of Dr. William Cullen, Rush's principal medical teacher at Edinburgh, helped form Rush's attitudes towards education. The marks of Cullen's genius which deeply struck Rush were order, regularity, system, ingenuity, punctuality, freedom of inquiry, academic tolerance, speculative intelligence, and, above all, his cautious yet profound belief in progress.[18] Dr. Cullen rebelliously lectured in English to his classes, rather than in Latin, a

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[16] Rush to Ashbel Green?, May 22, 1807, *Rush Letters*, 2: pp. 946–947.

[17] *Autobiography*, pp. 39, 42–43, 77.

[18] Rush to John Adams, March 15, 1806, *Rush Letters*, 2: pp. 915–916; Whitfield J. Bell, "Some American Medical Students of 'That Shining Oracle of Physic,' Dr. William Cullen of Edinburgh, 1755–1766," *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 94 (June, 1950): pp. 275–281.

practice which was surely not uncongenial to the young American who was to become one of his country's most formidable opponents of the "dead languages." Emulating Cullen, Rush later as a teacher habitually inspired his students with an appreciation of free inquiry and universality of outlook.[19]

Rush's studies of chemistry under the celebrated Dr. Joseph Black, besides developing his own inductive powers considerably, made him keenly aware of the broad educational uses of the new science. True, his immediate concern with chemistry was technological, but he also understood the general pedagogic value of chemistry in training men and women to think analytically.[20] Hence, in his proposed system of revolutionary education, he urged and promoted the study of chemistry at all levels of education and among both sexes.[21] And not to be overlooked, Rush the moralist realized, was the happy "sedative" effect that the study of the new science had on the passions.[22] Logically enough, Rush included chemistry in his "Plan of Education for Dickinson College."[23]

Dr. Cullen, Dr. Black, and many other persons warmly, even

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[19] For example, Rush, "On the Causes Which Have Retarded the Progress of Medicine, and On the Means of Promoting Its Certainty, and Greater Usefulness," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* pp. 150, 165; Rush, "Observations upon the Duties of a Physician, and the Methods of Improving Medicine, Accommodated to the Present State of Manners and Society in the United States," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: pp. 261–262.

[20] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 17–18; D. J. D'Elia, "Dr. Benjamin Rush's Key to a Thousand Sources of Knowledge," *J. Gen. Educ. 19* (July, 1967): pp. 112–118.

[21] "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* p. 49; Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 492; Rush, "Thoughts upon Female Education, Accommodated to the Present State of Society, Manners and Government, in the United States of America," *Rush Essays,* pp. 79–80.

[22] *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind* (Philadelphia, Kimber and Richardson, 1812), p. 337.

[23] Dickinson College Library MS, p. 5. I am indebted to Dr. Charles Coleman Sellers, Librarian Emeritus of the Dickinson College Library, for the use of this manuscript.

lovingly, described in his student journal, impressed Rush with their piety, knowledge, benevolence, and humanity.[24] Scotland thus became a kind of educational second country to him, and it remained so until his death. Later, Rush, as the "Father of Dickinson College," almost instinctively appealed to a Scotsman, Dr. Charles Nisbet, to head the institution; and while he was at Edinburgh, he was chiefly responsible for persuading John Witherspoon, another Scotsman, to assume the office of president at the College of New Jersey.[25]

Dr. Cullen's enlightened belief in the perfectibility of medicine, which so affected Rush, was akin to another belief widely held in the Age of Reason, i.e., the perfectibility of man by means of education. This doctrine of what the venerable Samuel Miller called, derisively, the *"omnipotence of education"* helped justify the extremest optimism of the period.[26] It was, moreover, a doctrine accepted with great enthusiasm by Rush; and his revolutionary program of education, like all of his social thought and action, was an heroic attempt to educate man to a republican perfection. This perfection of man, Rush believed, could be hastened by applying to man in society the newly discovered scientific principle of the association of ideas, which the English empiricists and David Hartley in particular had elaborated.[27] Social programs con-

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[24] "Journal Commencing Aug. 31: 1766," Indiana University Library MS.

[25] Rush to Charles Nisbet, April 19?, 1784, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 321–325; Rush to John Witherspoon, March 25, 1767, April 23, 1767, August 1, 1767, December 29, 1767, *ibid.,* 33–35, 36–38, 45–46, 46–48; *Autobiography,* pp. 50–51; Lyman H. Butterfield, *John Witherspoon Comes to America; A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953).

[26] *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century. In Two Volumes: Containing A Sketch of the Revolutions and Improvements in Science, Arts, and Literature, During that Period* (2 vols., New York, T. and J. Swords, 1803), 2: p. 296.

[27] David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (2 vols., London, 1749); Rush to Thomas Jefferson, January 2, 1811, *Rush Letters,* 2: pp. 1074–1075. For an excellent discussion of Hartley's associationism, see Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background; Studies*

ceived in the light of this principle could extirpate time-worn and degenerate habits of mind, practices, and manners. In this way, science and religion would raise man to the private and public perfections required of him in republican society—he would finally be republicanized! When Rush affixed his name to the Declaration of Independence, he quite consistently subscribed to this radically democratic view of the native equality of man. The corpus of his educational writings, collected and dispersed, really amounts to an elaboration of that revolutionary subscription.

In his earliest (1783) and perhaps most important tract on republican education, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," which he probably read here in Carlisle, Rush explained his purpose as an educator:

> The business of education, *he wrote,* has acquired a new complexion by the independence of our country. The form of government we have assumed, has created a new class of duties to every American. It becomes us, therefore, to examine our former habits upon this subject, and in laying the foundations for nurseries of wise and good men, to adapt our modes of teaching to the peculiar form of our government.[28]

Needless to say, the "wise and good" republicans educated in the new schools would be Christians on account of the necessary connection between republicanism and Christianity.[29] In fact, religion

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on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (Boston, Beacon Press, 1961), chap. viii, pp. 136–154.

[28] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 6–7, and Prof. Butterfield's note, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 314. Cf. Noah Webster, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (Hartford, 1783), Preface to Part I. There was, of course, even earlier discussion of the need for a distinct program of American education, but it seems to have been more suggestive than systematic. See, for example: anon., "Thoughts on Quotations from Authors. A Fragment," the *United States Magazine* 1 (August, 1779): pp. 352–353; anon., "Remarks on the Magazine for August, in a Conversation of Ladies, &c.," *ibid.* (September, 1779): pp. 404–405; "Senex," to the *Pennsylvania Packet,* September 28, 1782, reprinted from the *Virginia Gazette* for September 7, 1782.

[29] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 8–9;

was essential to republican education, because education without religion was devoid of virtue, and virtue was indispensable to liberty, which was, "the object and life of all republican governments."[30] Christianity, as Rush understood it, would make men virtuous and free.[31]

Again, as was his reasoned practice, Rush turned to legislation to effect those changes in education which he deemed necessary to safeguard and perpetuate the American Revolution.[32] It was not enough that republican government, brought about by the late war, had greatly increased what he called the "quantity of mind" as well as the "quantity of animal life" in the United States.[33] Intellect, although twenty times more plentiful in the nation in 1799 than in 1774, and knowledge, although one hundred times more plentiful, still required systematic direction in order to insure a general republican will.[34] Enlightened social legislation was absolutely

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Rush, "An Eulogium, Intended to Perpetuate the Memory of David Rittenhouse," *ibid.*, p. 358.

[30] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 8, 20; Rush to "The Citizens of Philadelphia: A Plan for Free Schools," March 28, 1787, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 414. Rush prized Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (1748) which held virtue to be the object of republican education, vol. 1, book 4. Unlike Rush's conception of virtue, however, Montesquieu's was neither Christian nor moral, but political.

[31] For a discussion of his understanding of Christianity, see my article, "The Republican Theology of Benjamin Rush," *Penn. Hist.* 33 (April, 1966): pp. 187–203. Dr. Corner has noted the influence of St. Pierre upon Rush's educational thought, *Autobiography,* note to p. 346. See Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Studies of Nature,* trans. by Henry Hunter (3 vols., Philadelphia, Abraham Small, 1808), 2: pp. 404–447.

[32] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 20; "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 124; Rush to Richard Price, May 25, 1786, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 388–389; Rush, "A Plan of a Peace-Office for the United States," *Rush Essays,* p. 184. Cf. "The Worcester Speculator," "On Republican Government," the *American Museum* 6 (November, 1789): pp. 385–387.

[33] "On the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Intellectual Faculties," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* pp. 109–110.

[34] *Ibid.;* "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 14–15.

necessary, particularly in the establishment and subsidization of schools.[35]

The "republican ferment" which Rush said had caused him to reconsider his medical and social opinions, also made him re-examine his opinions on education, and some of these he found to be erroneous.[36] Accordingly, in his educational writings directed to legislatures and the public, he strove to remove what he regarded as pernicious errors in republican education.

Compulsory study of Greek and Latin was high on his list, as was enforced reading of the ancient classics themselves. Personally, he wrote to John Adams, early study of the classical languages had forced upon him a "turgid and affected style" of writing which he had broken away from only after applying himself to the model English compositions of Lowth, Swift, and Hume.[37] "Who are guilty of the greatest absurdity," he asked in the same place, "the Chinese who press the feet into deformity by small shoes, or the Europeans and Americans who press the brain into obliquity by Greek and Latin?"

Republicans, obviously, must be free to express their own

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[35] "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 124; *Autobiography,* p. 216; "A Plan of a Peace-Office for the United States," *Rush Essays,* p. 184; Rush to "The Citizens of Philadelphia: A Plan for Free Schools," March 28, 1787, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 413–415.

[36] *Autobiography,* p. 89; Rush, "Thoughts upon the Amusements and Punishments, Which Are Proper for Schools," *Rush Essays,* pp. 71–72; "Thoughts upon Female Education," *ibid.,* p. 87.

[37] July 21, 1789, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 524; Rush to James Muir, August 24, 1791, *ibid.,* p. 604; "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* p. 29. A month after Rush's "Observations" appeared, the author sent a copy to his dear friend, John Adams, who strongly disagreed with him about the place of the classical languages in American education. The two friends agreed to disagree and kept up the correspondence on the subject for years; see *Rush Letters, passim,* and John A. Schutz and Douglass Adair (eds.), *The Spur of Fame: Dialogues of John Adams and Benjamin Rush, 1805–1813* (San Marino, The Huntington Library, 1966), chap. viii, pp. 166–179.

genius without Old World restraints. A new people required a new idiom, and Rush predicted that, once liberated from servile dependence upon classical and British norms, an American language would flourish.[38] By force of her armies, religion, and language, Rome had once unjustly ruled the world; now only her language remained, and Rush proposed to bar it and Greek from the United States along with slavery.[39] In Napoleonic France and corrupt Britain, the study of the "dead languages," Rush maintained, was calculated to distract the people from too close an attention to their tyrannical governments.[40] In the republican United States, any interference with government, however slight, frustrated the design of open and popular rule and was for that reason intolerable.

Greek and Latin were also unrepublican because of their pagan character. Recounting as they did the depraved conduct of the ancients—the murders, rapes, and incests—the classics possessed an "immoral tendency" flatly opposed to Christian republican virtue.[41] Naturally, the virtue of the people must be protected against such licentious influence, in the same way that the virtue

[38] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 492–493; "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* pp. 26–28: See Myer Reinhold, "Opponents of Classical Learning in America During the Revolutionary Period," *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 112 (August, 1968): pp. 221–234.

[39] Rush to John Adams, October 2, 1810, *Rush Letters,* 2: p. 1067; Rush to John Adams, June 15, 1789, and July 2, 1789, *ibid.,* 1: pp. 516, 517–518. Adams' reply was classical in its own right: "I should as soon think of closing all my window shutters, to enable me to see, as of banishing the Classicks, to improve Republican ideas," June 19, 1789, Alexander Biddle (ed.), *Old Family Letters: Copied from the Originals for Alexander Biddle.* Series A (Philadelphia, 1892), p. 40.

[40] Rush to John Adams, January 10, 1811, *Rush Letters,* 2: p. 1077.

[41] *Autobiography,* p. 345; "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* pp. 24–25, 33–34; "On the Means of Acquiring Knowledge," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 359. The influence of David Hartley in this regard was freely acknowledged by Rush, *Autobiography,* p. 345.

of the people had to be protected from the corrupting influence of slavery and militia laws.[42] Declared Rush:

> Much more, in my opinion, might be said in favour of teaching our young men to *speak* the Indian languages of our country, than to *speak* or write Latin. By their means, they might qualify themselves to become ambassadors to our Indian nations, or introduce among them a knowledge of the blessings of civilization and religion.[43]

Other studies to be avoided because of their immoral nature or uselessness were those of fiction, as in the novel, linguistics, alchemy, occultism, and moral philosophy.[44] "As yet the intrigues of a British novel," he asserted in his pioneer essay on feminine education, "are as foreign to our manners, as the refinements of Asiatic vice."[45] The republican character was still undefiled by excessive passions. It was true that the novel mirrored life, but not pure and simple republican life as it existed in revolutionary America.[46]

Unacceptable, too, in Rush's ideal curriculum was moral philosophy, which he regarded as a pagan study wholly out of

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[42] Rush, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements in America, upon Slave-keeping* (Philadelphia, J. Dunlap, 1773), pp. 2–3; "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty, *"Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: pp. 118–119; "A Plan of a Peace-Office for the United States," *Rush Essays,* p. 185; Rush, "An Address to the Ministers of the Gospel of Every Denomination in the United States upon Subjects Interesting to Morals," *ibid.,* p. 116.

[43] "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *Rush Essays,* pp. 55–56.

[44] "On the Means of Acquiring Knowledge," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 359; "On the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Intellectual Faculties," *ibid.,* pp. 112–113; Rush, "On the Education Proper to Qualify a Young Man for the Study of Medicine," *ibid.,* pp. 174–175; untitled lecture by Rush printed in Harry G. Good, *Benjamin Rush and His Services to American Education* (Berne, Indiana, Witness Press, 1918), pp. 240–241; Rush to Ashbel Green?, May 22, 1807, *Rush Letters,* 2: pp. 946–947.

[45] "Thoughts upon Female Education," *Rush Essays,* p. 81.

[46] *Ibid.,* pp. 81, 89; cf. anon., "Original Thoughts on Education," the *Columbian Magazine* 1 (September, 1787): p. 645.

place in Christian schools. "Infidelity systematized," was what Jonathan Edwards had called it, and Rush fully concurred.[47] Moral philosophy was offensive as a study calculated to misrepresent morals as independent of religion; a proposition clearly untrue and for that reason unrepublican.[48] A people trained in the sophistries of moral philosophy would be a nation bereft of right reason and revealed religion—a veritable nation of deists.[49] Here, unmistakably, stood forth Rush the evangelist and defender of pious and supernatural truths against the new realism of the Scottish school of thought, which tended to abandon revealed religion for moral philosophy.[50]

Corporal punishment in the schools was one of Rush's most disturbing educational aversions.[51] Such abusive treatment of American youth, he contended, was more becoming a fear-domi-

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[47] Rush to Ashbel Green?, May 22, 1807, *Rush Letters,* 2: p. 947; Rush, "On the Opinions and Modes of Practice of Hippocrates," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 292.

[48] "On the Education Proper to Qualify a Young Man for the Study of Medicine," *ibid.,* p. 174; Rush, "On the Necessary Connexion Between Observation and Reasoning in Medicine," *ibid.,* p. 13; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 8–9.

[49] See the untitled lecture by Rush printed in Good, *Benjamin Rush and His Services to American Education,* pp. 240–241; Rush, "On the Character of Dr. Sydenham," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 53.

[50] Rush, "Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book," *Rush Essays,* p. 105; Rush, "On the Causes of Death, In Diseases That Are Not Incurable," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* pp. 86–87; "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: pp. 95–96, 99–100; Rush, "Thoughts on Common Sense," *Rush Essays,* p. 250; Rush to Thomas Jefferson, January 2, 1811, *Rush Letters,* 2: p. 1075. Jefferson's philosophical beliefs were consistent with Scottish realism, and, of course, his ideal of education was a secular one, Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1964), pp. 45, 48–53, 89; Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), *passim.* Yet, some of Jefferson's positions on religious instruction in public education are ambiguous; see Robert M. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion in Public Education* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962), chap. x, pp. 202–226.

[51] "Thoughts upon the Amusements and Punishments, Which Are Proper for Schools," *Rush Essays,* p. 68.

nated monarchy than a courageous and expansive republic.[52] "The fear of corporal punishments," Rush observed, "by debilitating the body, produces a corresponding debility in the mind, which contracts its capacity of acquiring knowledge."[53] Psychologically, Rush's revolutionary principle of the association of ideas worked here as well as in other connections. Imperious and harshly disciplinary teachers promoted not free inquiry and respect for learning in their classes, as they should in a republican society, but "despotism and violence."[54] And despotism and violence led to monarchism, not republicanism.

Foreign influences in republican education were of course suspect to Rush. Studying abroad was to be discouraged. ". . . An education in our own, is to be preferred to an education in a foreign country," Rush asserted. "The principle of patriotism," he continued, "stands in need of the reinforcement of prejudice, and it is well known that our strongest prejudices in favour of our country are formed in the first one and twenty years of our lives. . . . Passing by, in this place, the advantages to the community from the early attachment of youth to the laws and constitution of their country, I shall only remark, that young men who have trodden the paths of science together, or have joined in the same sports, whether of swimming, scating, fishing, or hunting, generally feel, thro' life, such ties to each other, as add greatly to the obligations of mutual benevolence."[55]

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 70; "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *ibid.*, p. 56.

[53] "Thoughts upon the Amusements and Punishments, Which Are Proper for Schools," *ibid.*, p. 67.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71, 67; "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *ibid.*, p. 56.

[55] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *ibid.*, p. 7. For the popularity of this idea among American writers on education in the post-Revolutionary period, see Allen O. Hansen, *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 46 *et passim*. Cf. Thomas Jefferson to John Banister, Jr., October 15, 1785, Julian P. Boyd *et al.* (eds.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (17 vols., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1950–), 8: pp. 635–637.

The Old World practice of quartering boys in dormitories was unrepublican, according to Rush. "The practice," he wrote, "is the gloomy remains of monkish ignorance, and is unfavourable to the improvements of the mind in useful learning, as monasteries are to the spirit of religion. I grant this mode of secluding boys from the intercourse of private families, has a tendency to make them scholars, but our business is to make them men, citizens and christians."[56] Not surprisingly, Rush recommended that Dickinson College students live with private families.[57]

Probably the most serious error of all in pre-revolutionary education in America, to be corrected now in the new age of republicanism, was that of not using the Bible in *all* the schools. Not a few of Rush's compatriots maintained that the schools of the nation should exclude the Bible and religious studies as unrepublican, but for Rush there was no more certain way of nurturing republicanism than by teaching American youth the precepts of Holy Writ.[58] He complained: "We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of christianity, by means of the bible; for this divine book, above all others, favours that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws, and all those sober and frugal virtues, which constitute the soul of republicanism."[59] All that was necessary for America was to form Christians in the tax-supported schools in order to produce republicans for the nation; or, more

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[56] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, p. 14.

[57] "Plan of Education for Dickinson College," MS, p. 16.

[58] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, pp. 8–9; "Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book," *ibid.*, pp. 94–95, 98–100, 112–113; "A Plan of a Peace-Office for the United States," *ibid.*, p. 183. Perhaps the clearest explanation of Noah Webster's position on the use of the Bible in American schools is in his letter to the editor of the *Universal Asylum, and Columbian Magazine* 7 (September, 1791): pp. 191–192.

[59] "Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book," *Rush Essays*, pp. 112–113.

strictly, Christians and republicans would be joined together in the schools as Christian republicans, since Christianity and republicanism were really inseparable positions. Rush made his point even more strongly: "A Christian cannot fail of being a republican. The history of the creation of man, and of the relation of our species to each other by birth, which is recorded in the Old Testament, is the best refutation that can be given to the divine right of kings, and the strongest argument that can be used in favor of the original and natural equality of all mankind. A Christian, I say again, cannot fail of being a republican, for every precept of the Gospel inculcates those degrees of humility, self-denial, and brotherly kindness, which are directly opposed to the pride of monarchy and the pageantry of a court."[60]

The religious instruction which Rush designed to accomplish this would be, he thought, acceptable to all sects because of its uncontroversial nature.[61] It was to consist of lectures presenting the evidences, the various sectarian doctrines, and the truths of Christianity.[62] And, again, in his "Plan of Education for Dickinson College," Rush sought to implement his ideas by having students "taught the catechisms of their respective churches."[63]

A program of this kind was not intended to inculcate a system of religion, in the ordinary sense of the word, but even if it did, Rush asked, why should we not provide our students with a system of religion as we did systems of politics, geography, philosophy,

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[60] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 8–9.

[61] "Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book," *ibid.,* pp. 100–101; Rush to Richard Price, May 25, 1786, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 389; Rush to "The Citizens of Philadelphia: A Plan for Free Schools," March 28, 1787, *ibid.,* pp. 414–415; "Thoughts upon Female Education," *Rush Essays,* p. 82.

[62] *Ibid.;* "Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Education," *ibid.,* p. 49. William Paley's celebrated *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (London, 1794) was strongly recommended by Rush for this purpose, Rush to Ashbel Green, December 9, 1802, *Rush Letters,* 2: p. 854.

[63] MS, p. 1.

and the other sciences?[64] "I claim no more then for religion, than for the other sciences," Rush continued with transparent sincerity,

> and I add further, that if our youth are disposed after they are of age to think for themselves, a knowledge of one system, will be the best means of conducting them in a free enquiry into other systems of religion, just as an acquaintance with one system of philosophy is the best introduction to the study of all the other systems in the world.[65]

Christianity, moreover, promoted knowledge, rather than obstructing it the way other religions did.[66] Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, David Hartley, and a multitude of other Christian philosophers had been responsible for the greatest scientific discoveries because of the affinity of truths for one another and the wide scope of the Christian understanding itself.[67] Now, in the new Christian republic of America, there was no predicting how many similarly great Christian philosophers might be formed in revolutionary schools.

On the positive side, education for Rush was the republicanization and Christianization of man in America: the making of the virtuous, well-informed, and patriotic citizen. It was, personally, his dauntlessly optimistic effort—worthy of the age—to accommodate special, evangelistic religious beliefs to a new political order.

Appealing to his own state legislature by title, while in fact petitioning all of the states, Rush outlined a scheme of republican education for Pennsylvania. Free schools should be opened in

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[64] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, pp. 9–10; Rush to John Armstrong, March 19, 1783, *Rush Letters*, 1: p. 295.

[65] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, p. 10.

[66] "Thoughts upon Female Education," *ibid.*, pp. 83–84, and note to p. 84; "An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, 1: p. 123.

[67] *Ibid.*; "Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book," *Rush Essays*, p. 101; "On the Character of Dr. Sydenham," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures*, pp. 60–61.

townships and districts with one hundred or more families.[68] Tax-supported, these schools would provide instruction in arithmetic, English, and German; and would send some of their pupils to four colleges, carefully located in the state. Graduates of the colleges, in turn, might study medicine, economics, and natural and international law at a state university in the capital city.[69] All together, the free schools, the colleges, and the university would produce from the diverse populations of the state one great, prosperous, instructed, and enlightened citizenry.[70]

Two of the colleges projected by Rush for the state system were Dickinson and Franklin Colleges, located at Carlisle and Lancaster, and conceived as places of higher education for the Scotch-Irish and German residents of the state. Rush—for whom higher education was indispensable to freedom—was of course the principal founder of the first institution and a zealous champion and charter trustee of the second.[71]

Nationally, Rush proposed the establishment of a federal university, "where the youth of all the states," he wrote, "may be melted (as it were) together into one mass of citizens after they have acquired the first principles of knowledge in the colleges of

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[68] "A Plan for Establishing Public Schools in Pennsylvania, and for Conducting Education Agreeably to a Republican Form of Government," *Rush Essays*, pp. 3–4; *Autobiography*, p. 216.

[69] "A Plan for Establishing Public Schools in Pennsylvania," *Rush Essays*, pp. 2–4.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 4; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

[71] "A Plan for Establishing Public Schools in Pennsylvania," *ibid.*, pp. 3–4; Rush to John Montgomery, October 15, 1782, *Rush Letters*, 1: p. 290; Lyman H. Butterfield, "Benjamin Rush and the Beginnings of 'John and Mary's College' Over Susquehanna," *Bulwark of Liberty, Early Years at Dickinson College; The Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana, 1947–1950* (New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1950); Rush to "The Citizens of Pennsylvania of German Birth and Extraction: Proposal of a German College," August 31, 1785, *Rush Letters*, 1: pp. 364–368; Rush to Annis Boudinot Stockton, June 19, 1787, *ibid.*, pp. 420–427; Rush to John King, April 2, 1783, *ibid.*, pp. 298–299; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, p. 20.

their respective states."[72] This nationalization of state college graduates, already instructed in the government and laws of their own states, would be achieved by educating them in "federal principles," that is, the branches of the new federal government, the Constitution, and the laws of the nation.[73] In addition to these subjects, young men at the Congressionally financed university should study the practical arts and sciences, including useful rather than ornamental literature, ancient and modern history, agriculture, industry and commerce, applied mathematics, military science—which he said, parenthetically, was regrettable but necessary—natural philosophy and chemistry, natural history, philology, German and French, and physical education.[74]

Rush believed that physical education was necessary in the curriculum not only "to impart health, strength, and elegance to the human body," but to promote "religious, moral and political instruction."[75] Republican students, moreover, should follow a uniform, "temperate diet" mainly of "broths, milk and vegetables.

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[72] Rush to Richard Price, May 25, 1786, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 388; Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *ibid.,* 491–495; Rush to John Adams, June 15, 1789, *ibid.,* p. 517; Rush, "An Address to the People of the United States. . . . On the Defects of the Confederation," the *American Museum* 1 (January, 1787): pp. 9–10. Both Professor Good, *Benjamin Rush and His Services to American Education,* p. 261, and Professor David Madsen, *The National University; Enduring Dream of the USA* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1966), p. 16, credit Rush's formal proposal of a national university as the earliest. Rush's student and close friend, David Ramsay, had suggested the need for "a great Continental University" in his famous *Oration on the Advantages of American Independence* (Charleston, 1778), printed in the *United States Magazine* 1 (January-March, 1779): note to p. 105, but apparently never developed the idea.

[73] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 495–492; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 18–19.

[74] *Ibid.;* Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 491–495; "Of the Mode Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 13.

[75] *Ibid.;* Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 493; "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 13.

The black broth of Sparta, and the barley broth of Scotland," Rush added, "have been alike celebrated for their beneficial effects upon the minds of young people."[76] The new students of the Republic, Rush continued, should refuse "spirituous liquors," since alcohol was damaging to both mind and body, and for that reason the drink of monarchies rather than of republics.[77] Dr. Rush further prescribed "moderate sleep," cleanliness, manual labor, and "occasional solitude" for his revolutionary scholars.[78]

In the early Republic, Rush contended, there was little if any place for "ornamental literature": "Such are the histories of the incests and rapes and worship of heathen gods, with which the Greek and Roman classics abound, and which, to the disgrace of reason and religion, form a part of the education of boys in christian countries. Such are most of the fables and traditions of modern and ancient nations. Such are the disputes about words and names which have filled whole volumes, in many of our libraries. Such are all dissertations upon alchemical and mystical subjects; and such are most of the novels in all languages of the world."[79] Rather than ornamental literature, American students should apply themselves to ancient and modern history, so that they might discover the ways by which the science of government might be perfected.[80]

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[76] *Ibid.*

[77] *Ibid.;* "Three Lectures upon Animal Life," *Medical Inquiries and Observations* 1: pp. 39–40; Rush, "An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits upon the Human Body and Mind, with an Account of the Means of Preventing, and the Remedies for Curing Them," *ibid.,* pp. 169–170.

[78] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 13.

[79] "On the Means of Acquiring Knowledge," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 359; cf. "Extract of a Letter to the Hon. William Samuel Johnson, L. L. D. President of Columbia College in New-York, from the Hon. Hugh Williamson, M. D. and L. L. D. Dated 24th Sept. 1789," the *American Museum* 7 (February, 1790): pp. 103–105.

[80] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 17; "Observations upon the Duties of a Physician, and the Methods of Improving Medicine," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: p. 264. On the use of "history" by the American revolutionaries, see Professor Douglass G. Adair's

A practical study of great importance for Rush was the study of eloquence, which he held to be vital in American education. "It is well known," he wrote, "how great a part it constituted of the Roman education. It is the first accomplishment in a republic, and often sets the whole machine of government in motion. Let our youth, therefore, be instructed in this art. We do not extol it too highly when we attribute as much to the power of eloquence as to the sword, in bringing about the American revolution."[81] Thus, eloquence had helped make the Revolution and would now, as part of universal republican education, help preserve it as well.

Federal students must apply themselves to composition, too, in order to learn how to express new republican ideas and feelings. America should be independent in language as well as in politics, and her youth must be taught republican simplicity in writing. In Rush's words: "The turgid style of Johnson—the purple glare of Gibbon, and even the studied and thickset metaphors of Junius, are all equally unnatural, and should not be admitted into our country."[82] Americans must write directly and without European affectations. Truths in the new Republic were simple and, hence, simply expressed.[83] And even those students who might not succeed in mastering republican prose would certainly profit from what

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essay, "Experience Must Be Our Only Guide: History, Democratic Theory, and the United States Constitution," in Ray A. Billington (ed.), *The Reinterpretation of Early American History: Essays in Honor of John Edwin Pomfret* (San Marino, The Huntington Library, 1966, pp. 129–148, and Professor H. Trevor Colbourn's Boyd Lee Spahr Lecture of November 1958, "The Historical Perspective of John Dickinson," which formed part of his larger study, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1965).

[81] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* p. 16.

[82] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 493.

[83] Rush, "Observations upon the Cause and Cure of the Gout," *Medical Inquiries and Observations,* 1: pp. 188–189; Rush to Jeremy Belknap, June 6, 1791, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 584; "An Enquiry into the Consistency of the Punishment of Murder by Death, with Reason and Revelation," *Rush Essays,* pp. 169–170. Cf., for example, John Whittler, "The Ranger. No. 1," the *United States Magazine* 1 (April, 1794): pp. 17–19.

Rush the psychologist believed to be the strengthing effect of composing on the operations of the mind.[84]

The study of vocal music ranked high in the new revolutionary curriculum. Music had, what Rush called, "mechanical effects in civilizing the mind . . . and thereby preparing it for the influence of religion and government."[85]—Of course Christian religion and republican government! Music, too, had great power in controlling the passions which interfered with republican scholarship.[86] And Rush the medical philosopher, once again coming to the aid of Rush the educational thinker, proclaimed music efficacious in curing diseases.[87]

Industry, commerce, and applied mathematics were subjects not to be neglected at the proposed Federal University. Indeed, along with agriculture, they were vital studies in the *new* America, where republican civilization depended upon national prosperity.[88] So much was this the case, Rush believed, that Congress should pay to send agents to Europe for the purpose of acquiring for use at home the latest knowledge in commerce, industry, and agriculture.[89] Concerning the new American businessman, Rush emphasized that he should be as well educated as the American of older professions. "The time is past," he asserted, "when an academical education was thought to be unnecessary to qualify a young man for merchandize. I conceive no profession is capable of receiving

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[84] "On the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Intellectual Faculties," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* p. 105.

[85] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays,* pp. 13–14.

[86] *Ibid.;* Rush, "On the Utility of a Knowledge of the Faculties and Operations of the Human Mind to a Physician," *Sixteen Introductory Lectures,* pp. 265–266.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: pp. 492, 495; Rush to Elias Boudinot?, "Observations on the Federal Procession in Philadelphia," July 9, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 472.

[89] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters,* 1: p. 493.

more embellishments from it."[90] Business and businessmen were to be raised to a new dignity in republican America!

After the completion of their work at the federal university, Rush pointed out, the university graduates would not only be able to teach republicanism and federalism to their countrymen, but would form a corps of excellently trained civil servants. In fact, after the proposed national university had been in operation for thirty years, Rush urged with high professionalism, only its graduates should be allowed to fill civil service positions.[91]

Rush's concern with education was not limited to the men and boys of the Christian Republic. Women, too, had a most definite place in Rush's revolutionary program. For too long, he maintained, American women had been oppressed by British-style educations. Now, in an enlightened republic, modish lessons at the harpsichord, novel-reading, and prattle on ladies' fashions and the theater simply would not do.[92] American women must be given the best possible education in knowledge and virtue because of the new and great influence they exerted in republican society.[93] They were, indeed, in a position to form or deform the nation according to how they raised their children and dispensed their affections. Hence, they should be induced to read moral essays, history, theology, poetry, and travels.[94] "It would require," Rush speculated, "a lively imagination to describe, or even to comprehend,

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[90] "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Rush Essays*, p. 16.

[91] Rush to "Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," October 29, 1788, *Rush Letters*, 1: pp. 494–495.

[92] "Thoughts upon Female Education," *Rush Essays*, pp. 87–88, 85, 92, 81–82, 89. Cf., for example, anon., "A Defence of the Female Head-Dress at Present in Fashion," the *United States Magazine* 1 (June, 1779): pp. 268–271, and Timothy Dwight's "The Friend. No. V," the *American Museum* 6 (August 1789): pp. 154–156. For the little effect of Rush's ideas on girls' schools in Philadelphia, see Thelma M. Smith, "Feminism in Philadelphia, 1790–1850," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 68 (July, 1944), p. 247.

[93] "Thoughts upon Female Education," *Rush Essays*, pp. 91–92, 87–88; "Thoughts upon the Amusements and Punishments, Which Are Proper for Schools," *ibid.*, pp. 70–71.

[94] "Thoughts upon Female Education," *ibid.*, pp. 81–82.

the happiness of a country, where knowledge and virtue, were generally diffused among the female sex."[95]

Informing every opinion Rush ever advanced on education was his optimistic, eighteenth-century belief in the molding power of education. Reinforced by Rush's new science of the mind, which he based on the principle of the association of ideas, there was no discernible limit to the educability of man.[96] If man could be shaped by enlightened, indirect legislation in society, as Rush firmly believed, then what could not be done to him by direct education. Clearly, every conceivable improvement of man was possible by means of education; but—and this was the crux of Rush's belief—education must be devised in terms of the truths of Christianity and republicanism.

Not unjustly, one might say that Rush's philosophy of revolutionary education for America was a highly idealized and systematic version of his own religious and political education.

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[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

[96] Donald J. D'Elia, "Dr. Benjamin Rush and the American Medical Revolution," *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 110 (August, 1966): p. 233, and *idem*, "Benjamin Rush, David Hartley, and the Revolutionary Uses of Psychology," unpublished typescript. The originality of Rush's conscious use of associationism (which he largely derived, along with his physiological psychology, from David Hartley), as well as his politico-religious ideas, can be seen by comparing plans of education put forward at the time. See, for example, Hansen, *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century*, which outlines some of the plans, including Rush's. Professor Hansen and other general students of Rush's educational ideas have failed, understandably, to perceive the radically different nature of his philosophy of revolutionary education, based as it was on his new psychological science which, in Rush's view, constituted a mental physics of social reform—the ultimate science of the Enlightenment.

"WE HAVE AIMED HONESTLY AT DOING GOOD:" TRUSTEESHIP *at* DICKINSON, 1783-1816

JAMES A. BONAR

March 4, 1966

James A. Bonar

Dr. Bonar, a graduate of Drew and the Johns Hopkins Universities, has made a continuing study of the history, philosophy and ethics of academic administration. At the time of his Spahr Lecture he was Assistant Professor of History at St. John's University. He is presently on the faculty of Manhattanville College. His lecture, somewhat amended and enlarged, has been published in STUDIES IN MODERN HISTORY, *1968, edited by Professor G. L. Vincitorio. It is reprinted here in that version through the courtesy of the St. John's University Press.*

"WE HAVE AIMED HONESTLY AT DOING GOOD:" TRUSTEESHIP *at* DICKINSON, 1783-1816

IN THE BLEAK WINTER OF 1799, one of Dickinson College's most influential founding trustees was wondering whether it had been worth it to gather friends and money together for a college in Carlisle seventeen years earlier. Doctor Benjamin Rush was writing one of his frequent letters of advice from Philadelphia to Colonel John Montgomery of Carlisle, an old friend and Rush's chief collaborator in the college since 1782. Dickinson College was in perilous straits, for it had been on the brink of extinction for several years. The two trustees could not take much comfort from concrete achievements in Carlisle. Instead, Rush cheered himself with the thought that "we have aimed honestly at doing good by our attempts to establish a nursery for the church and state at Carlisle."[1] Thirteen years earlier another trustee used similar words to explain his devotion to the arduous task of launching a college. "We act not for ourselves, but solely

[1] Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, January 13, 1799, Rush Correspondence, in the Philadelphia Library Company, Ridgeway Branch. This collection will be hereafter cited as Rush Correspondence.

for the good of our country and of posterity, and in trust for all the benefactors of the institution."[2] To these gentlemen, trusteeship was the mandate to educate the community as best they could. It was doing good, in Franklin's sense of the phrase.

But a less flattering light was cast on trusteeship in general and on the performance of the Dickinson trustees in particular by others associated with the college. The Reverend Charles Nisbet, first principal, or president, of the college, complained incessantly of "that disgraceful subjection to arbitrary trustees," that "threatens to ruin all our seminaries, or to render them entirely useless." In Nisbet's considered opinion, "it will be impossible ever to introduce learning into this country, 'till this plague of trustees is extirpated from among us."[3] The eminent Presbyterian divine, Samuel Miller, who knew much of the college's early history, also measured the performance of the early trustees and found it lacking. "Some of them were persons of such views and habits as rendered them a dead weight on the whole establishment," wrote Miller.

> Some of them took little or no interest in its affairs. Others were disposed to interfere with its management unreasonably and mischievously. Indeed, their interference with the course of instruction, and between the faculty and students, were [*sic*] so frequent and serious as essentially to invade the best interests of the college.[4]

The existence of such radically different assessments of the quality of the early trustees' stewardship nags the historian to ask which is closer to the truth. Were the trustees enlightened humanitarians who worked to guide society toward progress, or were they inept, even malicious, bumblers? It is true that the above testimony

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[2] John King to Rush, April 8, 1786, *ibid.*

[3] Charles Nisbet to Jedediah Morse, January 4, 1800, Dreer Collection, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, hereafter cited as HSP, and Nisbet to Alexander Addison, February 23, 1797, Darlington Memorial Library, Pittsburgh.

[4] Samuel Miller, *Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet, D. D. Late President of Dickinson College, Carlisle* (New York: R. Carter, 1840), p. 340.

comes from prejudiced witnesses on each side,[5] but there is still a question which is closer to the truth. Only the story of the Dickinson board's aspirations and actions will supply the answer.

The place to begin is the institution of trusteeship and its place in American society. The Board of Trustees invested by law with final authority and responsibility for education is uniquely American. In European universities, the faculty governed itself in various corporate structures under legal forms derived from Medieval guild traditions. Migration to America was a sea change that placed higher education in a new environment. The idea of a European guild-like corporation of academics was stifled for lack of any such group willing and available to teach in the first American colleges. Instead, responsibility for education was delegated to an outside group with the necessary power and prestige and given legal form in a college charter.[6] The American board of trustees thus represented society's concern and responsibility for education.[7] The Colonial pattern encouraged the notion that schools should be responsive to the needs and pressures of the commonwealth. There

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[5] Trustees Rush and King struggled against formidable odds to establish the college and keep its head above the waves of debt that threatened to swamp it. On the other hand, Nisbet's antipathy against the trustees was notorious in his own time and in the recent past. See, for example, Rush to John Montgomery, September 25, 1786, John Hall to Rush, September 1787, Rush Correspondence, and James Henry Morgan, *Dickinson College, The History of One Hundred and Fifty Years* (Carlisle, Dickinson College, 1933), pp. 131–144. Miller's partisanship resulted from his friendship for Nisbet, whom he viewed as a man wronged, and his conviction that the trustees delivered the college over to secularism. See Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet, passim.*

[6] The above is based on the excellent account in Richard Hofstadter, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the College* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) pp. 6–8, 114, 121–124, 133, 135–137. Harvard and William and Mary, the first two American Colleges, combined vestiges of European faculty control (Harvard's Corporation, William and Mary's President and Masters) with *de facto* control by outside groups under charter (Harvard's Overseers and William and Mary's Visitors). Yale College, founded in 1701, was the first American college to dispense with even vestiges of European forms, and legally empower the non-teaching trustees with complete control and responsibility.

[7] Cf. Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Vintage Books 1964), ch. XXVIII, "The Community Enters the University."

were seeds of trouble here, however, for different definitions of society's needs led to attempts to invade the legal rights of trustees. When it was alleged that Yale College was out of touch with the religious needs of Connecticut's citizens during the religious upheavals of the 1750's, the legislature sought to intervene. Benjamin Gale, the leading proponent of the scheme, truculently raised the question of the commonwealth's power over Yale College. "For my part, I consider the college as a school that every man hath an interest in, and ought to be concerned for," he wrote. Yale College, "under proper regulation, may be a seminary for training up youth in learning, and virtuous, and generous principles," but "under a bad management, may have a dangerous influence upon the whole community, and diffuse arbitrary principles, bigotry, and corruption all over the land."[8] Thomas Clap, Yale's president and the legislature's main objection, led the small band of trustees in a successful battle against the public interference demanded by Gale and his friends, but the college suffered. The quarrel in Connecticut did not fully resolve the question of the rights of the commonwealth against legally chartered boards, for Clap's battle was waged on other grounds.[9]

The coming of the Revolution raised the question of the community's relationship with colleges in a sharper form. This was especially true in Pennsylvania, where the legislature altered the charter of a college and removed the trustees as part of revolutionary changes. In 1779, at the urging of the popular party called the Constitutionalists, the Pennsylvania Assembly dissolved the Board of Trustees of the College of Philadelphia and discharged

[8] Benjamin Gale, *A Calm and Full Vindication of a letter Wrote to a Member of the Lower House of Assembly, Showing That the Taxes Imposed on the Students of Yale College, Are Stated Higher than Necessary to Defray the Annual Expenses of that School . . . Being a Full Answer to a Letter Wrote to a member of the House of Representatives, in Vindication of Yale College: With Some Further Remarks on the Laws and Government of That Society* (New Haven: James Parker & Co., 1759) p. 31.

[9] See Louis L. Tucker, *Puritan Protagonist: President Thomas Clap of Yale College* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1962) pp. 201–231.

some of the faculty because they were alleged to be pro-British. Joseph Reed, chief executive of the state and one of the leaders of the popular party, asserted that the public interest would be served best by legislative intervention. "We cannot think the good people of this state can, or ought to, rest satisfied, or the protection of government be extended to an institution framed with such manifest attachment to the British government and conducted with a general inattention to the authority of the state,"[10] he declared. A new board of trustees, including the president and vice president of the Supreme Executive Council (which was the state's new, multiple executive) and four other state officials, was created. The college's property was transferred to the new board, and the legislature added confiscated Loyalist estates that were expected to yield a maximum income of fifteen hundred pounds per year. The name was changed to The University of the State of Pennsylvania.[11] William Smith, who had been ejected from the presidency by the change, protested such a radical exercise of the public interest, as had President Clap earlier. "The constitution of Pennsylvania directs the legislature to *nurse and encourage* seminaries of learning, but not to destroy them," he remonstrated. The college was inviolate, he argued, for it was a private institution chartered under provincial law and financed mainly by private donors.[12] The former trustees waited long for satisfaction. It was only when the more moderate party, called the Republicans, controlled the legisla-

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[10] Quoted in Horace W. Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D. D.* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros., 1879), II, 22.

[11] Robert L. Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania 1776–1790* (Harrisburg, 1942), pp. 77–78, and Edward Cheyney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740–1940* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission 1940), pp. 119–120. Cheyney suggests that perhaps the Constitutionalists had purer motives than the Republicans gave them credit for. He sees them as men who brought significant curricular modernization and illustrious teachers such as David Rittenhouse (pp. 129–146).

[12] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* March 19, 26, April 2, 1788. Smith was seeking to restore the college to the former board of trustees at this time, and the above quotations are from his petition to the Assembly. He presented a similar argument in 1783, *ibid.,* June 4, 1783.

ture with a slim majority in 1790, that a measure of restitution was made. Dickinson's first board was gathered in this atmosphere charged with concern about society's responsibility for education and with the clash of different interests over the control of higher education.

The college in Carlisle owes its existence to the fact that several Pennsylvanians, like Doctor Rush, were not happy with the course of events in Pennsylvania during the Revolution, and hoped to change them by education. They thought that colleges were necessary to extract lasting benefits from the rather chaotic upheaval. In Rush's words, colleges were "the best bulwark of the blessings obtained by the revolution."[13] Rush's guiding hand and the sharp political division between moderates (organized as the Republican faction) aligned a group of trustees who were in general agreement on why a new college was needed. Rush boasted truthfully of the attitude of the first trustees when he confided to a friend that "this college is at present wholly in the hands of gentlemen of liberal minds—men who have been uniformly friendly to the union of the states and the power of congress, and opposed to those romantic ideas of government which are equally destructive of liberty and republicanism."[14]

In trustees for Dickinson, Rush urged that gathering that Pennsylvania needed a new college for several reasons. "The business of education has acquired a new complexion by the independence of our country," he proclaimed. "The form of government we have assumed has created a new class of duties to every American."[15] The Constitutionalist's seizure of Pennsylvania in 1776 made education in

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[13] Cheyney, *University of Pennsylvania,* (University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 150–166; Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 152–194, 220.

[14] *Freeman's Journal,* February 23, 1785; and see Lyman Butterfield, "Benjamin Rush and the Beginnings of 'John and Mary's College Over Susquehanna,' " in *Bulwark of Liberty* ("The Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana," Vol. I, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1950), pp. 30–39. Rush to John Jay, January 16, 1785, Rush Correspondence.

[15] Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral, & Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1798), p. 6.

republicanism especially necessary in that state, he thought, for these radicals seemed bent on ruining the state. "Let us be active, my friend, in rescuing the state from the hands of tyrants, fools and traitors," he wrote to Colonel Montgomery.[16] There was an undercurrent of anti-intellectualism in the radical leaders' rhetoric that disturbed moderates. Some Constitutionalists appealed to the masses to reject men like James Wilson who defended the old provincial government with legal erudition in the face of the people's will. Thomas Smith, a backcountry Republican who became a trustee, reported that the popular party claimed "that any man, even the most illiterate, is as capable of any office as a person who has had the benefit of education; that education perverts the understanding, eradicates common honesty, and has been productive of all the evils that have happened in the world."[17] Moderate men were disturbed by such assaults on reason and reasonable men. When Rush was later proselytizing in the cause of higher education, he reminded his fellow citizens that "the time is remembered with shame and indignation when the people of Pennsylvania were called upon to 'reject men of learning' in choosing a body of legislators to form a system of government for the state."[18]

Although Pennsylvania now had a state university, Rush and his friends thought a new college necessary. The state university

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[16] Rush to John Montgomery, November 5, 1782, in Lyman Butterfield, *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951) I, 292, hereafter cited as *Rush Letters*.

[17] Thomas Smith to Arthur St. Clair, August 23, 1776, quoted in David Hawke, *In the Midst of a Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 198. James Cannon, one of the early Constitutionalist leaders, repeatedly attacked learned men as elitists. There is clear evidence of this anti-intellectualism in Burton A. Konkle's *George Bryan and the Constitution of Pennsylvania, 1731–1791* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1922), pp. 121, 122, 118. In *Freeman's Journal,* January 26, 1785, it was reported that a Constitutionalist legislator said that "much learning is hurtful, even in a Senator or Governor."

[18] Rush, "To The Citizens of German Birth and Extraction: Proposal of a German College," August 31, 1785, in *Rush Letters,* I, 367.

was firmly in the hands of their enemies and would be of no use to moderate men. Rush claimed that a "certain secret junto" of radical leaders, led by the Reverend Doctor John Ewing, who had been rewarded with the presidency of the university, had engineered the charter alteration.[19] Their motive was clear to all thinking men. "Dr. Ewing wished to hold the key of all the learning in the state in his hands," because the radicals "all dreaded the effects of a good education upon their narrow schemes."[20] This account of Ewing's motives may sound overly dramatic, but he later attacked Rush for seeking the Dickinson charter. He argued that a new college was not needed, because the university welcomed all applicants, and he alleged that the re-constituted board of trustees represented all groups in the state.[21] Another radical claimed that society should be protected against indiscriminate educational institutions that might not be in the public interest as defined by the Constitutionalists. "Let a law be enacted to make it treasonable to establish seminaries of learning, or schools of any kind, that are not licensed by a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court, or by the learned provost [Ewing's title] and five trustees of the state university," advised this anonymous author. "In this way only, will toryism, republicanism (improperly so called) and sedition be rooted out of the state."[22] There was little hope for the plans of Rush and his friends in such a university.

The college planners sought the help of Presbyterian clergymen, in addition. The reason is clear in Rush's argument that religion was essential in republican education. "The only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion,"

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[19] Rush, "Reasons against founding a college at Carlisle: ironical," dated May 20, 1783, printed in Harry G. Good, *Benjamin Rush and His Services to American Education* (Berne, Indiana: Witness Press, 1918) pp. 244–248.

[20] Rush to Charles Nisbet, August, 1784, *Rush Letters,* I, 337–338.

[21] See the delightful account of this controversy in Alfred O. Aldridge, "Dickinson College and the 'Board Bottom' of Early Education in Pennsylvania," in *Early Dickinsoniana* ("The Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana, 1957–1961," Vol. III; Carlisle: Library of Dickinson College, 1961), pp. 93–114.

[22] *Freeman's Journal,* January 19, 1785.

he wrote. "Without this there can be no liberty and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments . . . all its doctrines and precepts are calculated to promote the happiness of society, and the safety and well-being of civil government."[23] Denominational connection was favored for several reasons. Students would best learn the ethical tenets that religion taught if they studied a coherent system of doctrine, rather than the rather vague abstractions of eighteenth-century non-denominational Christianity.[24] Denominations were useful because they provided a ready-made institutional framework on which to build schools. "Every good man beholds with pleasure the pains which several religious societies have taken to encourage learning among themselves since the revolution," Rush wrote. "If each society in this manner takes care of its own youth, the whole republic must soon be well educated."[25] The Presbyterians were an excellent choice, in the estimation of the influential Benjamin Rush. Not only was he a member of this church, but the numerous denomination required a college trained ministry. The Carlisle site was chosen because Presbyterians there were interested in education. The trustees of an elementary school in town had decided to re-charter it as an academy, and had turned to the ministers in the local Presbytery for help. With their support, Colonel Montgomery, one of the elementary school trustees, came to Philadelphia to use his influence for an academy charter in the summer of 1782. He contacted Rush, who persuaded him that a college would be preferable.[26] In this way, backcountry education gained the support of Rush

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[23] Rush, *Essays*, p. 8.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[25] Rush, "To the Citizens of Pennsylvania of German Birth and Extraction: Proposal of a German College," August 31, 1785. The idea appears in most of Rush's writing on education. See especially "To the Citizens of Philadelphia: A Plan for Free Schools," March 28, 1787, *Rush Letters*, I, 364, 414–415.

[26] Donegal (later, Carlisle) Presbytery minutes for October 18, 1781, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. See Whitfield Bell, "The Other Man on Bingham's Porch," *"John and Mary's College"* (Westwood, New Jersey: 1956), p. 39.

and other influential Philadelphians, and moderates interested in a new college found a site for it and the nucleus of the Dickinson Board of Trustees. Five of the nine elementary school trustees and four of the five clergymen added by the Presbytery became active trustees in the college's original board.[27]

The Presbyterians also afforded an excellent opportunity to rally moderate political opinion. Rush believed that the coming of the Revolution had split the denomination politically, as extremists led by men like the Reverend John Ewing had flocked to the Constitutionalist banner. Presbyterians would suffer when the political tide turned against the Constitutionalists, as it inevitably would, thought Rush. Moderates must therefore close ranks around institutions like the proposed college, and prepare to re-build the Presbyterian political edifice in their image.[28]

The first stage in the evolution of the board was the meeting between Rush and Montgomery in Philadelphia during the summer of 1782. Recruitment of trustees began immediately. There were definite criteria for legal guardians, as the college was intended for a definite purpose. They must be men who were active in the Revolution and who tried to guide it into moderate paths. The Republican faction was clearly the source for this kind of man. They must also be symbols of morality to the community. Presbyterian and other clergymen were the obvious choices here. More utilitarian reasons dictated other choices. The charter bill would have to pass in a legislature rife with partisanship. The Assembly should be canvassed for members who would support the charter.

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[27] *Ibid.*, 38–39; Morgan, *Dickinson College*, pp. 3–6, 38–39; *Centennial Memorial of The Presbytery of Carlisle* (Harrisburg: Meyers Printing and Publishing House, 1889) I, 344–346. The nine were John Montgomery, Samuel McCoskry, John Armstrong, James Wilson, and Robert Magaw, from the grammar school, and the Reverend Messrs. John King, John Black, William Linn, and John Linn, from the Presbytery.

[28] Rush to John Armstrong, July 30, 1783, to John Bayard, June 25, 1784, Rush Correspondence; and Butterfield, "Rush and the Beginnings of 'John and Mary's College' Over Susquehanna," *Bulwark of Liberty*, pp. 30–39.

Representation from a wide geographic base would also be wise strategy.

Montgomery and Rush began to enlist such men while still in Philadelphia. They gained the support of two members of the legislature, Robert McPherson and William Maclay. Both were leading backcountry Republicans in town for the Assembly sessions.[29] Montgomery returned to Carlisle to collect others, while Rush busied himself in the same quest in Philadelphia. Montgomery soon prevailed on the Reverend John King, Presbyterian pastor of Mercersburg, to bring the plan for a college before the Carlisle Presbytery.[30] In November, King laid the project before a group of ministers and laymen convened in Carlisle to discuss the grammar school's future. Opinion was divided on the advisability of a college, but King and four other ministers felt sufficiently encouraged to move ahead.[31] The new recruits were the Reverend Messrs. John Black, William Linn, Samuel Waugh, and James Lang, all pastors of congregations near Carlisle.[32] They decided to draft petitions to the legislature, with Rush's help, and circulate them widely to give the appearance of state-wide support.[33]

Meanwhile, Rush pursued trustees in Philadelphia. He succeeded in converting several eastern Republican leaders. John

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[29] Freeman's Journal, March 2, 1785. There is a biographical sketch of McPherson in William H. Egle, "The Constitutional Convention of 1776—Biographical Sketches of Its Members," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* IV (1880), 94–95; and one of Maclay in DAB. For Maclay's state politics see Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 106, 216.

[30] Rush to John Montgomery, December 16, 1784, Rush Correspondence. The best biographical sketch of King is in Alfred Nevin, *Churches of the Valley: An Historical Sketch of the Old Presbyterian Congregations of Cumberland and Franklin Counties, in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: J. M. Wilson, 1852), pp. 83–116.

[31] John King to Rush, November 15, 1783, Rush Correspondence.

[32] John King, James Lang, John Black, William Linn, and Samuel Waugh to Rush, November 13, 1782, *ibid.* There are biographical sketches of Linn and Waugh in *Centennial Memorial of The Carlisle Presbytery,* II, 56–59, 73; and of Lang in Nevin, *Churches of the Valley,* pp. 163–166.

[33] John King *et al.,* to Rush, November 13, 1782; Rush, "Hints for establishing a college at Carlisle," dated September 3, 1782, Rush Correspondence.

Dickinson, then President of the Supreme Executive Council, was cultivated early for his wealth and his political prestige. So too were James Wilson, William Bingham, and James Ewing, John Dickinson's Vice President.[34] Colonel Montgomery was similarly successful in the backcountry. Robert Magaw and Thomas Smith were recruited from Carlisle, where both were lawyers and politicans, as was the physician Samuel McCoskry. Thomas Hartley, from York, and David Espy, from Bedford County, were enlisted.[35]

There was, unfortunately, opposition in the backcountry. General John Armstrong, one of Carlisle's founders and a man whose local prestige rivalled Montgomery's, thought the college unwise. He was joined by the Reverend Robert Cooper, an influential figure in the Carlisle Presbytery.[36] Their opposition could

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[34] John Montgomery to Robert Magaw, February 11, 1783, Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP; an undated circular letter from Rush to various Presbyterian leaders, early 1783, Rush Correspondence. There are biographical sketches of Ewing and Bingham in *DAB*. Ewing's state politics are shown in Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 107, 123, 143. Rush to John Montgomery, October 15, 1782, *Rush Letters,* I, 290.

[35] John Montgomery to Robert Magaw, February 11, 1783, Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP. Charles Himes, *Colonel Robert Magaw, The Defender of Fort Washington* (Carlisle; Hamilton Library Association 1915), pp. 8–9, 52, treats Magaw's eminence as a politician and lawyer. His Federalist politics are shown in *Pennsylvania Gazette* October 17, 1787. The standard biography of Thomas Smith is Burton A. Konkle, *The Life and Times of Thomas Smith,* 1745–1809 (Philadelphia: Campion & Co., 1904); see pp. 26, 43, 61–67, 75, 154–158, 227–252, and ch. 7. Hawke, in *Midst of a Revolution,* pp. 60, 79, 190–191, identifies him as a prominent member of the moderate "machine" in the backcountry. Samuel Miller, who knew McCoskry while studying in Carlisle, called him a prominent and respected citizen, in *Memoir of Nisbet,* p. 302. Espy was a lawyer and moderate politician in Bedford County, see Konkle, *Thomas Smith,* pp. 43, 47, 61, 98, 102. In 1784, he was one of the Republicans on the Council of Censors. Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* p. 278. There is a biographical sketch of Hartley in *DAB;* see John Black to Rush, April 21, 1783, on his influence in York County, Rush Correspondence.

[36] John Montgomery to Rush, April 16, 1783, John Armstrong to Rush, April 15, 1783, *ibid.* There is a biographical sketch of Armstrong in Alfred Nevin, *Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley* (Philadelphia: Fulton Publishing Co., 1876), pp. 75–79; many mss in the Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP, contain detailed evidence of Armstrong's pioneering in Carlisle. See John Harriss, March 25, 1784, *ibid.,* and Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 158–159, for

conceivably block the plan's progress in Cumberland County. They would have to be won over before the Carlisle Presbytery met in April, 1783, because this meeting was to launch petitions to the legislature that would convene in the fall. Armstrong and Cooper were drawn in by a combination of persuasive epistles from Rush and pressure exerted by the westerners.[37] The Presbytery meeting produced the desired favorable consensus. Twenty-four trustees were formally appointed, and it was agreed that a working majority should be chosen from persons living west of the Susquehanna, to facilitate attendance at meetings.[38] All those previously approached were retained and three more ministers were added to those already involved. Armstrong and Cooper were also appointed, to assure their favor.[39]

With the approach of the day that the legislature would act

Armstrong's moderate politics. For Cooper, see William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: R. Carter & Bros., 1858), III, pp. 270–273.

[37] John Black to Rush, March 8, 1783, John King to Rush, March 3, 1783, John Montgomery to Rush, April 16, 1783, Rush Correspondence. See Rush's deft persuasive letter to Armstrong, March 19, 1783, and Rush to John King, April 2, 1783, in *Rush Letters,* I, 294–297, 298–300.

[38] John Montgomery to Rush, April 15, 1783. The signed petition from Cumberland County specified that the majority of the board should reside west of the Susquehanna, and Rush had specified twenty-four in his "Hints for establishing a college in Carlisle," dated September 3, 1782, Rush Correspondence.

[39] Montgomery to Rush, April 15, 16, 1783, *ibid.* The new ministers were John McKnight, Thomas Craighead, and Thomas McPherrin. The last two were soon replaced by John Linn and James Lang, as unsuitable. Craighead was "tampered with" in Philadelphia by John Ewing, according to a letter to Rush from John Black, June 21, 1783, *ibid.;* and McPherrin left the area temporarily. He was named a trustee in 1798. There is a sketch of McKnight in Sprague, *Annals,* III, 371–375, and of McPherrin in Nevin, *Churches of the Valley,* p. 136. Rush asked that Lang be appointed in a letter to Montgomery, May 3, 1783, Rush Correspondence. There is a biographical sketch in Nevin, *Churches of the Valley,* pp. 163–166, and of Linn in Sprague, *Annals,* III, 375–376. The last two on the list were William Irvine, who later accepted the position, and Joseph Montgomery, Rush's brother-in-law, a minister-turned-politician. Montgomery was later dropped because he tried to switch the college's location to Harrisburg during the Assembly's discussion. Rush to John Montgomery, September 1, 1783, in *Rush Letters,* I, 309. There is a biographical sketch in Sprague, *Annals,* II, 346n.

on the petitions, other considerations came to the fore. The board grew from twenty-four named in the spring of 1783 to a total of forty in the fall. It was first decided that the college should be outwardly interdenominational although the Presbyterians would naturally be dominant.[40] The German clergy were obvious candidates. They ministered to a large ethnic group and their affluent flocks might prove to be a source of contributions. Two Lutheran pastors, Henry Muhlenberg and Christopher Schultze, together with the German Reformed patriarch William Hendel, were brought in during the summer.[41] Minority denominations were also approached successfully. A representative from the Associated Presbyterian Church was secured in the person of the Reverend Alexander Dobbin, of Gettysburg.[42] The Baptists were offered a share, and the Reverend James Sutton was listed in the charter as a trustee. Sutton declined the honor, however, a year later, because his denomination "would not have an equal share in the benefits" with such minority representation.[43] By the fall, the board con-

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[40] Rush to Montgomery, May 3, 1783, John Black to Rush, March 3, 1783, John King to Rush, September 19, 1783, Rush Correspondence. The charter proclaimed toleration for all. "Persons of every religious denomination among Christians shall be capable of being elected trustees, nor shall any person be either as principal or professor or as pupils, be refused admittance for his conscientious persuasion in matters of religion." Copy of the charter, in Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[41] Rush wrote Montgomery, May 3, 1783, that the board should be expanded to thirty members. He suggested six men who were not the German clergymen, which indicates that they were not yet included, Rush Correspondence. There is a biographical sketch of Hendel in Henry Harbaugh, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America* (Lancaster: J. M. Westhaeffer, 1872) II, 120–130; his prominence is clear in *Minutes and Letters of the Coetus of the German Reformed Congregations of Pennsylvania, 1747–1792* (Philadelphia, Reformed Church Publishing Board, 1903), passim. There are biographical sketches of Schultze and Muhlenberg in William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Lutheran Pulpit* (New York: R. Carter & Bros., 1869), pp. 43–44, 59–62.

[42] John Black to Rush, June 21, 1783, Rush to John Montgomery, October 26, 1783, Rush Correspondence. On Alexander Dobbin, see *Centennial Memorial of the Carlisle Presbytery,* I, 344–345, 64–65.

[43] Sutton declined so late that he was formally named in the charter.

tained fourteen clergymen, about one third of the forty seats. Presbyterians were dominant, with nine, and there were two Lutherans, and one each from the German Reformed, Baptist, and Associated Presbyterian churches. The charter provided that the proportion of clergymen should be retained.[44]

Support in the legislature, where radical backers of the state university might block a charter grant, was assured in the late summer of 1783. Friendly legislators and others who would provide wider geographical representation were enlisted. Rush had advised selection from every county, but the original list did not contain representation from Bucks, Chester, Lancaster, Berks, Northampton, Westmoreland, or Washington Counties. Even though there was a temporary Republican majority in the Assembly,[45] wisdom dictated that some more moderate legislators should be enlisted, especially if they were geographically right and ethnically sound. Four more Germans, John Arndt, of Northampton County, Peter Spycker, of Berks, together with Henry Slagle and Assemblyman Michael Hahn, were wise choices. Arndt, Hahn, and Slagle were well-known German Republicans.[46] Stephen Duncan, of Carlisle, James Jacks, from Lancaster County, Henry Hill, a wealthy Philadelphian and friend of Rush, William Montgomery, of Northumberland, and Alexander McClean, from Westmoreland County in the far west, completed the legislative contingent. These last five were joined by John McDowell, a member of the Supreme Executive Council in 1783.[47] Washington County

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Alexander McClean to John Dickinson, February 10, 1784, Dickinson College, mss.

[44] Copy of the charter, Trustee minutes, *ibid.*

[45] Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* p. 123.

[46] There are biographical sketches of Arndt and Slagle in John B. McMaster and Frederick D. Stone, *Pennsylvania and The Federal Constitution, 1787–1788* (Lancaster: Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1888) pp. 713–714, 752. Hahn is an elusive figure, but see election reports in *Freeman's Journal,* October 24, 1781, October 16, 1782. The author has not been able to identify Peter Spycker further.

[47] James Jacks is listed in the election reports in *Freeman's Journal* October

furnished William McCleary, and Bernard Dougherty, Republican stalwart from Bedford County, completed the roll.[48] All counties were represented, as were most of the major religious and ethnic groups. There was strong partisan support in the legislature, and the charter bill passed easily in September, 1783.

The forty members of the board, "the friends of humanity and virtue," as Rush called them,[49] were perhaps united in state politics and humanitarian concern, but many were less than energetic about the college's affairs. The large board had been planned for fund-raising and political support, but only a small number ran the college. Many trustees failed to accept more than the token responsibility of their names inscribed on the charter. There were sporadic murmurings about lukewarm trustees before the college was a year old.[50] The more diligent resolved to pressure their delinquent colleagues who had not even taken the oath required

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16, 1782. There is a biographical sketch of Henry Hill in Egle, "The Constitutional Convention of 1776," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* III (1879), 441–442. A political enemy claimed that although Hill was "a man of considerable fortune . . . he is as devoted a tool of party, as the most needy office hunter in the house," and alleged that "he has been decidedly anti-constitutionalist from the beginning." *Freeman's Journal,* October 10, 1781. Montgomery wrote Rush, September 30, 1783, of his high hopes for Hill's financial support, Rush Correspondence. No identification of McDowell or Alexander McClean is available. See report of their election in *Freeman's Journal,* October 16, 1782, and *Pennsylvania Archives* (6th series; Harrisburg: 1907), XI, 406. William Montgomery was the only trustee who was not clearly a Republican in 1783. Formally a Constitutionalist, he was thought to be on the fence politically. John Armstrong to John Harriss, March 25, 1783, Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP. There is a biographical sketch in *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774–1961* (Washington: 1961).

[48] There are glimpses of Dougherty in Konkle, *Life of Thomas Smith,* pp. 46, 60, 86, 102, and 106; and Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 54, 59, 106. See also Dougherty to Robert McPherson, March 19, 1779, in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* I (1886), 477. No identification of McCleary has been found.

[49] Rush to John Arndt, March 31, 1784, Gratz Collection. HSP.

[50] Rush to Montgomery, December 29, 1784, Thomas Smith to Rush, January 23, 1785, ms: in Rush Correspondence.

by law of all school trustees, certainly a minimum requirement.[51] This tactic did not summon the guilty trustees to greater efforts, but it yielded some conscientious resignations and justified two removals by board action.[52] Men doubtless accepted the office casually, or simply to accommodate their friends. The difficulties of the first years dampened the public spirit of such fair-weather trustees. Even the faithful had moments when apathy seemed preferable to fruitless struggle. "The college is becoming a painful business," wrote John King. "Instead of having our hopes realized, our fears are more and more increased. I see certain ruin before us—we are sinking every year, and must fall ere long."[53] But a minority of the forty persevered in doing good.

A pattern of minority control appeared early in the first decade and continued until the college closed temporarily in 1816. The average attendance at the twenty meetings held during the first ten years was barely the nine required for a quorum. After this the average even dropped slightly.[54] During the first decade, no more than eighteen of the fifty-two men who were elected trustees actually ran the college. This total included seven Presbyterian ministers from the settlements near Carlisle, eight inhabitants of the town, together with Robert McPherson, of York County, and the two Philadelphians Henry Hill and Benjamin Rush.[55] Many

[51] The action was repeated the following year. Minutes for May 10, 1786, May, 1787, Trustee minutes, *ibid.*

[52] Subscriptions to the oath were recorded in the board minutes. Nine non-signers, including William Bingham and James Wilson, never attended a meeting. Resignations came from John Arndt, James Boyd, a last minute replacement, and Christopher Schultze. William Montgomery, the non-Republican trustee, and Peter Spycker, were removed by board action, on April 16, 1794. Trustee minutes for September 27, 1787, January 1788, April 16, 1794; John Arndt to John Armstrong, December 15, 1787, *ibid.*

[53] John King to Rush, Nov. 15, 1787, Rush Correspondence.

[54] The secretary recorded attendance at every meeting. The average attendance at the twenty meetings held between September 1783, and April 1794, was 11.5. From May, 1795, to September, 1815, it was 10.9. Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[55] The figure was arrived at by checking each trustee's attendance record, as

dropped away after the first board meeting, held conveniently in Philadelphia during a session of the Assembly, or after the second one, a ceremonial inauguration held in Carlisle. Others never attended any meetings. Those outside the immediate vicinity of Carlisle were naturally most susceptible to abstenteeism. Distance, the inconvenience of travel, advancing age, the press of larger affairs, and other excuses kept them away.[56]

The board became a local body. Political, religious, and social ties in Carlisle and Cumberland County determined the selection of trustees to replace the original ones. During the first decade, ten of the seventeen replacements were from the town, and three were from the Presbytery. Only five of the men that they replaced were from this area. This trend continued until the college closed temporarily. Between 1795 and 1814, there were twenty-eight more trustees seated. Fifteen were from Carlisle, and six were ministers from nearby communities within the Carlisle Presbytery. Of the remaining seven, four were from a short distance away.[57] Within the narrower confines, however, the original criteria were followed. Political moderates of Federalist persuasion, Presbyterians, and prominent Carlislers filled up the ranks.[58]

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well as the amount of committee activity for those not living in Carlisle. The criterion for active membership was either attendance at one-fourth of the meetings held during a trustee's tenure, or significant committee activity. Analysis of Trustee minutes, *ibid.*

[56] See no. 55, above. Those named to make the board widely representative were especially lax. Eleven who attended only one or two meetings were part of the expansion of the board. Politicians like William Maclay, Bernard Dougherty, Alexander McClean, John McDowell, James Jacks, and David Espy, were inactive, as were the Germans, Michael Hahn, Henry Slagle, Henry Muhlenberg, and William Hendel. James Wilson, Thomas Hartley, and William Bingham were involved in grander affairs, and John Dickinson was in semi-retirement. Attendance figures from Trustee minutes; John Dickinson to trustees, July 7, 1785, to John Armstrong, March 13, 1786, *ibid.*

[57] Trustee minutes, April 8, 1784 through September 31, 1814, *passim, ibid.*

[58] Fifteen of the non-clerical trustees named between 1788 and 1808 are clearly identified as Federalists, as they participated actively in local politics. They are William Irvine, Robert Johnson, John Creigh, Thomas Duncan, George

These men supported education because they had a stake in backcountry society. Stability and order were values that they wanted to conserve, as they led the backcountry in controlled progress. Instead of trying to halt the Revolution, they joined it to try to keep the reins in their hands. Dickinson trustees were part of the same natural aristocracy that dominated other college boards. Men like them across the nation tried to set the tone in education, business, and politics in the early republic.[59] A brief profile shows what manner of men they were.

Colonel John Montgomery, one of the most active of the early trustees, was in many ways a prototype of the western trustees. He was a leading member of the political and social establishment in the backcountry. He was one of the founders of Carlisle and held many civil offices as well as serving as a pioneer elder in the Presbyterian church. In the forefront of the revolutionary movement in Cumberland County, his sympathies lay with the moderates who eventually became the Republican party. He served in the Assembly and the Continental Congress at various times, and was

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Stevenson, Ephraim Blaine, Charles McClure, James Hamilton, Michael Ege, James Armstrong, Francis Gurney, David Watts, Robert Coleman, James Duncan, and William Alexander. *Carlisle Gazette,* Pennsylvania Historical Commission, October 21, 1795, January 29, 1800, November 2, 1804, September 13, October 4, 1805, November 4, 1808; and a list of Federalists who met in Carlisle in 1792, in *Independent Gazetteer,* September 24, 1792. See Harry M. Tinkcom, *The Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania, 1790–1801* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, 1950), pp. 170, 252, 189, 223. The Carlisle Presbytery went on record for Federalism in the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* October 31, 1787. See also John Montgomery to William Irvine, September 17, 1792, January 9, 1788, William Bingham to Irvine September 10, 1788, Irvine Papers, HSP. John Montgomery to Rush, June 12, 1788, Rush Correspondence.

[59] Hofstadter, *Academic Freedom,* pp. 149–151; Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University, a History* (New York: 1962), 173–175. See the description of the trustees of Franklin College in Frederic Shriver Klein, *The Spiritual and Educational Background of Franklin and Marshall College* (Lancaster, Commercial Printing House, 1939), pp. 42–44. Leonard Labaree's *Conservation in Early American History* (Ithaca, New York: 1959) is an excellent study of the nature and intentions of the Colonial elite who performed the same function before the Revolution.

appointed judge in Cumberland County in 1794. Like many of his fellow trustees, he was active during the late 1780's in support of the Federal Constitution and revision of the Pennsylvania one. As political leader, churchman, and college trustee, he worked for stability in the backcountry. He died in 1808, after devoting most of his public efforts since 1795 to the college. General John Armstrong was very like Montgomery. He was a founder of the town, a soldier in the French and Indian War and the Revolution, member of Congress, Presbyterian elder, and large land owner.[60] These two were joined by Robert Magaw and Thomas Smith, prominent Carlisle lawyers. Magaw and Smith both held a variety of minor civil offices in the backcountry before the Revolution, and then participated in the struggle on the moderate side. Magaw was active on the battle field while Smith shone in the legislative chamber. Both men had large law practices, and Smith also served in the state judiciary, finally becoming a Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1794.[61] There were also the lawyer-politicians Stephen Duncan and John Creigh, who was also a merchant. Doctor Samuel McCoskry, a busy physician, man of affairs, and small town politician, was the other active trustee from Carlisle.[62] Their three colleagues from outside Carlisle, in addition to Rush, were Henry Hill, William Irvine, and Robert McPherson. Hill was a wealthy Philadelphia merchant who served the board well as a committeeman by correspondence. He was a judge, member of the

[60] Bell, "Other Man of Bingham's Porch," *"John and Mary's College,"* pp. 35–38, 47–48, 59. See Page Smith, *James Wilson, Founding Father* (Chapel Hill: 1956), ch. IV, for a similar view of Montgomery's status. There is a biographical sketch of Armstrong in Nevin, *Men of Mark,* 75–79. The Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP, contain much evidence of Armstrong's status.

[61] Charles Himes, Colonel Robert Magaw, *The Defender of Fort Washington* (Carlisle: Hamilton Library Association, 1951), pp. 8–9, 52; Smith, James Wilson, pp. 44–47, 61. Konkle, *The Life and Times of Thomas Smith,* pp. 26, 43, 61–67, 75, ch. 7, 154–158, 227–252. Hawke, *In the Midst of a Revolution,* pp. 60, 79, 190–191.

[62] Nevin, *Men of Mark,* p. 281; *Carlisle Gazette,* January 3, 1793, December 19, 1792; Rush to John Montgomery, December 13, 1785; Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet,* p. 302; *Rush Letters,* I, 315n.

Assembly and of the Supreme Executive Council, and a militia officer.[63] McPherson held several political offices in York County, fought in both the French and Indian War and the Revolution, and served in the Assembly during and after that conflict.[64] William Irvine, who lived in Carlisle at various times while he was a trustee, was the other active layman. He held a large number of public appointments, and served with distinction in the Continental Army, reaching the rank of Brigadier General. His political connections were thought to be a great asset to the college.[65] The seven clerical trustees represented a religious establishment in the backcountry that was also interested in stability. Three of them were prominent in the higher councils of the Presbyterian church, Robert Cooper, of Shippensburg, John Black, of Gettysburg, and John King, of Mercersburg.[66] The other three members of the Carlisle Presbytery were quiet, industrious ministers who served the board dutifully. They were John Linn, of Shearman's Valley, Samuel Waugh, who ministered to several small congregations near Carlisle, and James Lang, whose several small congregations were near Chambersburg.[67] The last clergyman was the Reverend Alexander Dobbin, one of the leaders of the Associated Presbyterian Church in America, who worked harmoniously with the others. His church

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[63] Egle, "The Constitutional Convention of 1776," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* III (1879), 441–442.

[64] *Ibid.,* IV (1880), 94–95.

[65] Henry Simpson, *The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, Now Deceased* (Philadelphia, W. Brotherhood, 1859), pp. 600–601. Rush to John Montgomery, November 9, 1787, Rush Correspondence. The Irvine Papers, HSP, furnish an excellent picture of the man and his interests.

[66] Nevin, *Churches of the Valley,* pp. 83–116; Sprague, *Annals,* III, 270–273, 282–284; *Centennial Memorial of the Carlisle Presbytery,* II, 48–49, 68–69; Margaret Hunter, *Education in Pennsylvania Promoted by the Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: 1937), p. 130. John King delivered an oration on the importance of education which was printed in the *Carlisle Gazette,* March 25, 1789. McMaster and Stone, eds., *Pennsylvania and the Federal Constitution,* p. 719. Entry for April 11, 1798, Nathaniel Snowden Diary, ms in HSP; John Black to Rush, November 25, 1784, Rush Correspondence.

[67] Sprague, *Annals,* III, 375–376; *Centennial Memorial of the Carlisle Presbytery,* I, 194, 219, II, 73; Nevin, *Churches of the Valley,* pp. 163–166.

was near Gettysburg, where he also ran an academy and trained young men for the ministry.[68]

The active board remained small after the first decade, but became more secular, as the clergy fell away about the turn of the century. The Reverend Jeremiah Atwater, third principal, wrote that "the clergy had abandoned the college and given it up to be managed by a few."[69] The ministers slipped into the habit of attending only the meetings held at commencement. After the turn of the century, however, interim meetings were more frequent, and the small group referred to by Atwater turned out faithfully.[70] Their control was strengthened by the establishment in 1809 of an executive committee empowered to direct matters during recesses between board meetings, for they dominated this committee.[71] These "few gentlemen" were the same kind of natural establishment of professional men in Carlisle who had figured in the charter board. Their prestige came from their professions, their ancestry, or their political influence. James Hamilton, an Irish-born lawyer and Judge in the state Supreme Court, was the most active and influential. He took command as early as 1797 by sheer energy. He was seconded by Thomas Duncan, a prominent trial lawyer from Carlisle. Duncan had an extensive practice, a pioneer pedigree, and great influence in the county. David Watts was a third lawyer. He was formidable in the court room and reportedly depended on his ability to intuit the mood of a jury to win his cases. Hugh H. Brackenridge, author of the picaresque novel, *Modern Chivalry,* was the fourth lawyer. Brackenridge also held a position in the state judiciary. These lawyers were joined by three physicians,

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[68] *Centennial Memorial of the Carlisle Presbytery,* I, 344–345, 64–65.

[69] Jeremiah Atwater to Ashbel Green, July 8, 1811, Gratz Collection, HSP; see also John Montgomery to Rush, August 18, 1808, Rush Correspondence.

[70] The secretary recorded the names of those in attendance, so that the pattern is clear, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[71] The first such committee was appointed on Oct. 23, 1809. Membership was flexible, but almost always from the small group of Carlislers. Trustee minutes, *ibid.*

James Armstrong, James Gustine, and Samuel McCoskry, from the original group. Doctor Armstrong was the town's leading aristocrat and the son of General Armstrong of the original board. Active in Federalist politics, he was appointed to succeed John Montgomery in the state judiciary. James Gustine was very like Armstrong. He too was descended from a prominent family, and inherited social prestige. He too had a very limited practice and time for avocations. These men were joined by other leading citizens. The local Episcopalian minister, the Reverend John Campbell, fitted in smoothly. Campbell's congregation was small, in this predominantly Ulster-Irish world, but it included Attorney Watts. The other members of the group were Judge Jonathan Walker, General William Alexander, John Creigh, who remained from the earlier minority, and Jacob Hendel, who was the only German. All were prominent in town politics and the lower levels of the judiciary.[72]

Such men were interested in education to assure that cultural values, religion, and the learned tradition would flourish in Carlisle. Eastern leaders like Rush, John Dickinson, and William Bingham, found them their natural allies in the scheme of bringing a college to the backcountry. It was the Carlisle elementary school trustees' decision to enlarge their school that launched the college during

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[72] Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, February 23, 1797, Darlington Memorial Library, University of Pittsburgh. There is a sketch of Hamilton in Nevin, *Men of Mark,* pp. 213–214, and a great deal of his ms legal correspondence in the Hamilton Library, founded by his son, in Carlisle, Jeremiah Atwater called Duncan "the most influential member of the trustees," in a letter to Rush, March 11, 1811, Rush Correspondence. There is a sketch of Duncan in Simpson, *Eminent Philadelphians,* p. 324; and of Watts and James Armstrong in Nevin, *Men of Mark,* pp. 94–95, 103–105. Armstrong's position in the town is indicated by attacks on him in *The Carlisle Gazette,* October 17, 1795, October 3, 1798, October 4, 1804. Gustine's easy position and social prestige are shown in the early pages of Nathaniel Snowden's diary, HSP. I have also drawn on a brief memoir of high life in Carlisle, by James Hamilton, Jr., called "Recollections of Men & Things in Penna.," the Hamilton Library Company, Carlisle, for information about the trustees. *The Carlisle Gazette, passim,* also contains many notices of the activities of the group.

Colonel Montgomery's trip to Philadelphia in 1782. They wanted a stable basis for education because it was a valuable asset in their eyes. Thomas Hartley, a charter trustee from York, for example, complained from his home town that "we are exceedingly bad here for want of a teacher." One had promised to come, and Hartley hoped that he would prosper enough to stay.[73] The following year, Hartley was optimistic that a newly arrived dancing master and teacher of "polite accomplishments" would settle, because the pupils crowded in. His presence would bring a "new course of civilization" to the youth of York, thought Hartley.[74] Carlisle boasted a school of polite accomplishments in 1786, where French and Music were taught, three well-established school teachers from Ireland, and the preparatory school attached to the college. The French and Music teacher was made possible by "the interest and employment of Dr. Lemuel Gustine," whose son James took a prominent place on the board after 1800.[75] Carlisle citizens also tried to help less affluent students and collected money to "provide for the education of such poor persons as are unable to provide [their children] with masters." The "managers" of this philanthropy were drawn from the ranks of the trustees of the college, and they advertised their hope "that no person will be restrained by a principle of false pride" from taking advantage of such benevolence.[76] The spread of culture was responsible for another venture in Carlisle, the Carlisle Library Company, which existed between 1797 and 1807. This was a subscription library formed to afford its members wider reading, on the model of Franklin's

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[73] Thomas Hartley to Jasper Yeates, April 14, 1786, Yeates Correspondence, HSP.

[74] Hartley to Yeates, June 2, 1787, *ibid.*

[75] John Forrest to Rush, June 12, 1786, Robert Tait to Rush, May 20, 1786, Rush Correspondence.

[76] *Carlisle Gazette,* December 12, 1787, June 4, 1788. The trustees involved were John Montgomery, Thomas Duncan, Joseph Thornburgh, George Stevenson, Ephraim Steele, William Lyon, and the college's first and second principals, Charles Nisbet and Robert Davidson, were also managers.

library ventures. Surviving records show that the college trustees were its most enthusiastic patrons. The company decided to dissolve and share the assets, after some difficulty collecting the yearly dues, nine years after its inception. Although the stated reason was that "there appears to remain little or no disposition among many of the members any longer to cherish and support that institution," the college trustees backed it so firmly that they were fourteen of the thirty-four members sharing the capital.[77]

The active trustees were united by more than friendship, a common ideal of *noblesse oblige,* and reverence for culture. They clung to the idea that education was a social force essential to successful republicanism. The idea may have been tenuous in the beginning, but it gained force as the trustees struggled in the college. The latter received hostile scrutiny when it was launched and the trustees met critics with statements of purpose that defined a corporate image. John Dickinson was called upon in the first meeting held in Carlisle to invoke the spirit that brought them together. The others were so enraptured with his remarks that they entered them in the minutes. After the Revolution, reflected Dickinson, Pennsylvania leaders set themselves the task of wresting true victory from peace:

> They judged that they could not better employ the beginning of the peace so graciously bestowed than by forming an establishment for advancing the interests of religion, virtue, freedom, and literature. . . . They could not confer a greater benefit upon their country than by promoting the good education of others.[78]

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[77] Four other Dickinson trustees had been members, but seem to have been delinquent. Records and membership lists of the Carlisle Library Company, Dickinson College mss.

[78] "How prettily he touched on the upright intentions of those who first embarked on that glorious course," wrote John Montgomery to Rush, May 7, 1784, "I am persuaded that it effectually removed some jealousies that hung on some of our neighbors," Rush Correspondence. Dickinson's address is in the minutes of April 6, 1784, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. It is reprinted in part in Morgan, *Dickinson College,* p. 25.

The trustees were united to bring true republican principles to the backcountry through education. They could congratulate themselves on their altruism and expect good results in temperate politics. This sentiment hardened into the public image of the board. It came consistently to the fore in various forms until one is almost overwhelmed by its consistency. Petitions for the charter in 1783, official letters from trustees to the board, letters empowering trustees to collect money, petitions to the legislature for funds, addresses to the German clergy, and notices in the newspapers are all variations on the theme.[79] In, 1797, for example, one of the trustees delivered a homily to the senior class. He reminded the graduates that "your country is interested in the formation of those important principles by which your future conduct as citizens may be regulated."[80] The board was so conscious of tradition that the later trustees tried to re-create the original inspiration. In 1810 it was decided that the image should be re-furbished. The principal consulted the few original trustees, browsed among the board's papers, and re-invoked the spirit of 1783 in the labored prose of a commencement oration.[81] Rush's idea of a "bulwark of the blessings obtained by the Revolution," survived the enthusiasm of 1783, at least in the minds of the active trustees.

But more than the ardor of a few men for the cause was needed

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[79] See, for example, a signed petition from Cumberland County, and letters from Rush to John Montgomery, December 10, 1784, Thomas Smith to Rush, January 1, 1793, Rush Correspondence; petitions to the Assembly in minutes of April 8, 1784, June 16, 1785, letters to the Lutheran and German Reformed clergy, minutes of April 8, 1784, and September 30, 1784; official letters from the trustees to Charles Nisbet, September 29, 1784, to William Bingham, September 19, 1783, in Trustee minutes; John Dickinson to the board, December 11, 1798, to Rush, September 17, 1783, William Bingham to John Montgomery, August 10, 1783, Rush to John Jay, January 16, 1785, Dickinson College mss. Newspapers were also utilized by the trustees to spread their corporate image. See, for example, *Pennsylvania Gazette,* April 27, 1785, June 27, 1787; *Carlisle Gazette,* June 10, 1789, June 9, 1790, October 6, 1790, and July 27, 1791.

[80] *Ibid.,* March 29, 1797.

[81] Quoted in Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, October 11, 1810 Rush Correspondence.

in Carlisle. The chief duty of trustees, in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth, was to secure the money necessary to support their college. The problem was formidable in eighteenth-century America. The second group of American colleges, founded in the middle of the century, financed themselves with little help from the government. The College of Philadelphia, Kings College, the College of New Jersey, and Dartmouth existed mainly on private donations and modest tuition fees. Contributions were rarely enough to build a large endowment and thus assure a substantial and steady income. These colleges were doomed to initial periods of precarious finance because such donations provided only a hand-to-mouth existence. Sectarian jealousies, and other factors denied them the government funds that initially supported older colleges such as Harvard and William and Mary.[82]

The trustees were sure that the Carlisle college would avoid the difficulty, for they planned to combine private and state money. They expected the income from a growing endowment eventually to provide the basis for security. But as capital was scarce in the eighteenth century, the legislature would be called in to provide annual revenue until the infant college was firmly established. Their expectations of state subsidy rested on firm precedent and on the economic theory typical of the men on the board. The precedent was found in the Constitution of 1776, which directed that "learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one, or more universities" and in the state grant to the new university.[83] Their proto-Federalist economic theory also called for state support. To the trustees, Dickinson was a vital force in the development of

[82] Beverly McAnear, "The Raising of Funds by the Colonial Colleges," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXXVIII (1952), 591–594, 611–612.

[83] See the first petition for funds, drawn up at the meeting on April 8, 1784, in Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. and a draft petition, together with a signed one from Cumberland County, which attempt to prepare for a future grant, Rush Correspondence. The quotation from the Constitution of 1776 is from *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charter, and Other Organic Laws of the United States,* B. P. Poore, compiler (2 ed.; Washington, Government Printing Office 1878), p. 1547.

the commonwealth. The money spent on it was social overhead capital, investment necessary for social progress but not immediately productive enough to attract investment at a time when capital was scarce. State funds must be used to prime the pump. The same theory was behind other Federalist development projects that sought government money for canals, turnpike roads, and bounties for manufacturers.[84] Principal Atwater stated the board's theory passionately in a burst of anger at the legislature's slowness. "This is the only institution that bids fair to flourish between Philadelphia and the mountains," he exclaimed.

> Incalculable are the advantages that may flow from it, if rightly conducted and properly endowed. . . . Compare our wants (and I think I may say, the merits of the cause) with the wealth of the treasury—if the Assembly consists of rational men, they must aid us liberally. I have come here with an ardent desire to benefit the state, but will the state not afford any adequate means for making a respectable college.[85]

It only remained to convince prospective donors and the legislators that colleges were necessary for republican development and convert theory into cash.

It was hoped that an endowment of £10,000 could be amassed in a relatively short time.[86] The trustees planned to solicit donations

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[84] See Carter Goodrich, *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads 1800–1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), ch. I, "The spirit of improvement," and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Ideas and Economic Development," in Arthur M. Schlesinger and Morton White (eds.), *Paths of American Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963), pp. 110–113; and Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization 1606–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), I, 284–286, 290. Louis Hartz, in his *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776–1860* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 297–307, stresses the idea that both major political parties supported the philosophy in its general application.

[85] Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, January 17, 1810. See a typical trustee's view in Thomas Smith to Rush, January 1793, Rush Correspondence, and in *Pennsylvania Gazette,* April 27, 1785, *Carlisle Gazette,* January 10, 1798, June 26, 1799.

[86] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* January 1, 1783, Rush to John Montgomery,

in all the counties, tap the churches, and approach the Germans.[87] The plan seemed feasible. The response was chilling, however, as trustees were met with more tales of poverty than open purses. Collectors reported a great scarcity of cash in the backcountry.[88] Some met open hostility among influential men who felt slighted that the new college was not in their towns.[89] One reported that political antagonism from Constitutionalists hindered his collections in York County.[90] German clergymen were warm and encouraging, but pleaded poverty.[91] Some of the backcountry leaders had expected thin gleanings,[92] and hoped that wealthy Republicans in Philadelphia would cover the deficiency.[93] Trustee Rush made

December 29, 1784, Rush Correspondence. See Morgan, *Dickinson College,* p. 118.

[87] The board resolved at its first meeting to draw up twenty-four subscription books and distribute them to trustees in each county; and trustees to the Lutheran Synod, April 8, 1784, and to the German Reformed Clergy, September 30, 1784, minutes for these dates and for September 19, 1783, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[88] Letters to Rush from John Armstrong, January 6, December 13, 1784, John Black, January 8, 1784, Thomas Smith, January 23, 1785, John King, July 20, 1783, and William Linn, March 6, 1784, Rush Correspondence; Alexander McClean to John Dickinson February 10, 1784, to trustees, October 3, 1787, *ibid.*

[89] Thomas Hartley to Rush, January 8, 1785, James Jacks to Rush, February 3, 1784, *ibid.*

[90] John King to Rush, January 16, 1785, *ibid.*

[91] Rush to John Montgomery, July 31, 1784, enclosing a translation of the Lutheran clergy's reply, Rush Correspondence. Abraham Blumer and John Helfrich, for the German Reformed clergy, to the trustees, April 28, 1785, Dickinson College mss. The German Reformed clergy distrusted Rush's overture, which also invited them to provide a professor, because they had "reasons to fear that this might tend to suppress the German language, and even our nationality, and might be to the disadvantage of our religion." Coetal letter dated from Reading, April 29, 1785, in *Minutes and Letters of the Coetus Of the German Reformed Congregations of Pennsylvania, 1747–1792* (Philadelphia Reformed Church Publishing Board 1903), p. 404.

[92] John Montgomery to Rush, September 30, 1783, John Armstrong to Rush, April 15, 1783, Rush Correspondence.

[93] Rush encouraged this hope with glowing reports that money waited to be gathered in. Rush to Montgomery, December 3, 1783, March 9, May 3, December 29, 1784, *ibid.;* Montgomery to Robert Magaw, February 11, 1783, Lamberton Scotch-Irish Collection, HSP.

vigorous efforts in the city, because he wanted his home territory to respond generously, but his high expectations were unrealized. Financial instability held pledges down, and even prevented collection of the full amount subscribed.[94] Hard-pressed Colonial colleges found Britain a sure source of funds. Before the Revolution, collections in England and Scotland brought twenty-four thousand pounds to American colleges between 1745 and 1775, and proved to be the slim margin between success and failure for several schools.[95] Trustee William Bingham, who was providentially in England on business in 1783, canvassed America's friends and those whom he considered enlightened men.[96] But the Revolution had dried up British sources. England was hard-pressed financially, partly as a result of the American war, and even those friendly to independence thought that the young and vigorous republic should fend for itself.[97] In spite of all efforts, the endowment remained slim.

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[94] Rush to trustees, March, 1787, September 11, 1790. Rush had collected slightly over £2000 in certificates or "bonds" of the state or national debt, then a common medium of investment. Memorandum of financial transactions dated April 29, 1786, Rush Correspondence. See Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 169–172, 174–175, for the Constitutionalist finances that Rush claimed were hurting his collections. Failure in his home territory impelled Rush to justify himself to his friend Montgomery. The very eminence of the trustees was a liability, he claimed, for Maclay and McPherson were "so constantly employed in the Assembly and in committees that they are unable to attend to the business of soliciting for us." He also pleaded with Montgomery to leave Congress so that he could "accompany you to all the gentlemen of the republican side of the question [where] we should pick up at least 2,000 more." There was also, he claimed, a regrettable failure to improve the opportunity of a Presbyterian synod in Philadelphia in 1784. Two of the most influential western Presbyterians, Robert Magaw and John Black, failed to attend. Rush to John Montgomery, May 24, Feb. 17, 1784, Rush Correspondence.

[95] McAnear, "Raising of Funds by Colonial Colleges," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXXVIII (1952), 599–606.

[96] William Bingham to John Montgomery, August 10, 1783; trustees to William Bingham, September 19, 1783, in minutes for that date, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[97] Richard Price to Rush, January 1, 1783, Rush Correspondence, William Bingham to trustees, December 29, 1783, Dickinson College mss.

Benjamin Rush's suggestion that the trustees dip into their own pockets to swell the endowment was not enthusiastically received.[98] General Armstrong doubtless spoke for many of the western trustees when he told Rush that "you are exceedingly out at this time of day in your expectation from my assistance respecting the college." The General was land poor, short of ready cash, pressed for payment of old debts, and trying to provide for his old age.[99] The local situation was further complicated by competition. Carlisle was enduring recurrent collections in an active building campaign by the Presbyterian congregation which drew on the trustees and their friends.[100] The large contingent of backcountry parsons was in a similar situation, for salaries were small and usually in arrears. Clergymen would rather contribute their time to beg from others.[101]

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[98] Rush to trustees, October 21, 1781, in *Rush Letters,* I, 398; trustee minutes for May 8, 1788, Dickinson College mss; Rush to John Montgomery, May 10, 1788, Rush Correspondence.

[99] John Armstrong to Rush, February 28, 1784, *ibid.* Letters from John Lukens to Armstrong, October 3, 1781, and February 12, 1783, from Armstrong to Lukens, March 8, 1783, and receipts dated October and November, 1783, show that the General was pressed by his creditors and paying them in kind, Dickinson College mss. See also Armstrong to William Irvine, August 13, 1790, August 16, 1787, Irvine Papers, HSP. Several other trustees, considered wealthy, had large assets tied up in land, and were short of the ready cash needed by the college. See John Montgomery to William Irvine, December 31, 1792, *ibid.;* Thomas Hartley to Jasper Yeates, March 4, 1784, February 25, 1785, October 2, 1786, January 3, 1797, Yeates to Hartley, July 10, 1800, Jasper Yeates Correspondence, HSP. Hartley and Robert Magaw were also land-poor and advertized their holdings intermittently in the *Carlisle Gazette* in 1788 and after, without evident success.

[100] Conway P. Wing, *A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Carlisle* (Carlisle: 1877), pp. 125–126. Documents in the Joseph Murray Collection of early records of the Carlisle Presbyterian Church show that many of the trustees contributed to these recurring campaigns, The Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

[101] William Linn to Rush, March 6, 1784, James Jacks to Rush, February 3, 1784, Rush Correspondence. The Reverend Nathaniel Snowden, appointed trustee in 1794, is an extreme example of backcountry clerical poverty. He was able to serve his two congregations near Harrisburg and also feed his family, only by borrowing liberally from his father. Entries for November, 1795, March 30, 1797, Dec. 11, 1797, Nathaniel Snowden Diary, HSP.

Affluent Philadelphia trustees also showed a reluctance to contribute liberally in the emergency. John Dickinson and William Bingham, both very wealthy men, were cool to the suggestion that they rise to the college's needs and donate more.[102]

The security of a £10,000 endowment evaded the trustees, and the college closed temporarily in 1816 without ever approaching it.[103] Income from the small fund was inadequate. In 1784, it had only been £130, and eight years later only a mere £200 was realized. The college's annual expenses were well over £1,000 at this time. Non-endowment income was only £300, so the college ran £500 in deficit annually.[104] Trustee Rush tried to increase the endowment by speculation in the loan office bonds that were the usual medium of donation. With what he considered inside in-

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[102] Bingham's subscription was very difficult to collect. The trustees had to call on all their diplomatic talents and ask frequently for it. Trustees to Henry Hill, undated, minutes of June 3, November 11, 1789, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Efforts to collect more from John Dickinson in the 1780's are a similar story of financial frustration. He had given them land mortgaged for £700, and they asked unsuccessfully that he pay the mortgage so that the land could be sold. He had also established an annuity based on rent, for Principal Nisbet's wife's support in the event of the principal's death. The trustees asked him to sell this land outright, or give it to them so that they could sell it. This maneuver also failed. John Dickinson to John Armstrong, March 13, 1786, to the trustees, July 7, 1785, March 15, 1787, Armstrong to Dickinson, January 10, 1787, and minutes for August 11, 1785, May 10, November 1786, and November 10, 1789, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. John Armstrong to Rush, July 24, November 4, 1786, Rush Correspondence. Dickinson disappointed the trustees after his demise, also, when he failed to leave "a single legacy out of his own family," Rush to Montgomery, March 31, 1808, *ibid.*

[103] Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 118–130, estimated that the endowment reached a total of £7600. This is not true value, for much of it was in land that could not be sold for the valuation given it by the trustees. The records are chaotic, and probably incomplete, but see financial report, minutes of April 7, 8, 1784, May 10, 1786, Trustee minutes, and financial reports dated June 15, 1797, Dickinson College mss.; Rush to John Montgomery, November 9, 1787, and Rush's reports dated 1786 and 1790, Rush Correspondence; and Montgomery to William Irvine, December 19, 1792, Irvine Papers, HSP.

[104] Minutes of April 7, 1784, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.; financial statement in a draft petition to the legislature, dated February 20, 1792, Irvine Papers, HSP.

formation on the securities market and on the mood of the legislators who were responsible for fluctuations in prices, he hoped that rising discount rates "will put a finishing stroke to the great fabric of our institution, and raise it . . . above the malice of its enemies as well as the lukewarmness of its friends." The board continued this policy as long as there was any endowment left.[105] Even shrewd speculation accumulated only a small addition, however, because the board was not able to use all of its resources productively. The trustees accumulated a great deal of land that was a dead asset because they could not sell or rent it easily.[106]

Private capital proved to be even scarcer than the trustees had imagined, or at least private capital for Dickinson College. Grants from the state legislature would have to fill the reservoir of social use capital. The board had hesitated to ask for money in the charter bill, lest the Assembly refuse both. In April, 1784, the time was judged right, and the trustees petitioned for annual revenue. Their request was for a yearly grant of £500, to be drawn from confiscated Loyalist property, and five thousand acres of land for the endowment. The sum was a close estimate, for their endowment income was deficient this amount yearly. The trustees planned carefully. It was realized that their campaign "if properly conducted," would "place our college upon a footing that will

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[105] Rush's activity and its results are explained in Rush to John Montgomery, October 30, December 16, 1784, April 12, June 27, 1785, October 12, 1786, November 9, 1787, and to trustees, September 11, 1790, and his financial statements for 1783–1786, and 1790, Rush Correspondence. See also Montgomery to William Irvine, December 19, 1792, Irvine Papers, HSP; and minutes of May 10, 1786, January and May 8, 1788, September 29, 1790, and December 19, 1792, May 27, 1795, April 11, 1806, Trustee minutes; and various receipts for interest dated December 24, 1802, January 5, 1803, March 27, December 29, 1806, Dickinson College mss.

[106] The growing debt is clear. See for example, statement of finances dated June 15, 1797, petition signed by James Wilson and others, undated, in James Hamilton's hand, and minutes of for April 7, 8, 1784, June 14, August 11, 1785, May 10, 1786, April 11, 1787, November 10, 1789, December 19, 1792, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College; Rush to John Montgomery, May 19, 1786, to trustees, March, 1787, Sept. 11, 1790, Rush Correspondence.

ensure its perpetuity to the end of time."[107] Robert Whitehill, a Cumberland County radical, was approached to introduce the petition. Such a stratagem would perhaps gain bipartisan support and avoid pitfalls in the legislature.[108] The amount requested seemed reasonable. The Assembly provided the state university with revenue and could hardly do less for Dickinson.[109] Although precedent, sound Federalist economic theory, and able strategy favored the college, they could not secure a legislative majority in the factious Assembly. The petition moved slowly in spite of all efforts while the trustees watched their hopes for annual revenue vanish. A compromise bill finally passed, after a two-year struggle. It was typical of post-revolution laws for education. It gave a little to many rather than enough to a few. Dickinson received only £500 in a lump sum, and ten thousand acres of western lands. Fifty thousand acres were also reserved for other institutions, and the law-makers felt that the state had thus redeemed its pledge to the future.[110]

Political vendettas defeated this first attempt. The Republican faction favorable to the board was soundly thrashed in the election that was held a few months after the petition was introduced. Since it had enjoyed ascendancy previously, its electoral defeat began a political crossfire that tore the assembly.[111] The tone of the Assembly frightened John Dickinson, then the state's chief executive, and a trustee from whom much was expected. Con-

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[107] John Montgomery to Rush, April 16, 1783, Rush to Montgomery, April 15, 1783, petition for Dickinson College from Cumberland County, *ibid.;* the petition is in the minutes of April 8, 1784, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[108] Rush to John Montgomery, July 31, Dec. 29, 1784, Rush Correspondence.

[109] Cheyney, *University of Pennsylvania,* pp. 123, 144–146.

[110] Rush to John Montgomery, November 28, 1785, in *Rush Letters,* I, 377; August 21, October 30, 1784, Rush Correspondence. Louise Walsh and Matthew Walsh, *History and Organization of Education in Pennsylvania* (Indiana, Pa. 1930), pp. 85–86.

[111] Rush to Montgomery, December 13, 1785, Rush Correspondence. See Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* p. 164, and ch. "Counter-Revolution Halted," for a detailed account of this stormy session.

vinced that the Constitutionalists would attack the college, he counseled prudence on all fronts. One trustee claimed that such deference cost the college money that Dickinson's influence might have obtained.[112] An unsuccessful Republican attempt to restore the state university to the original trustees also contributed to failure. This move originated in the previous session, when the Republicans were stronger, and was taken up as a cudgel in the party fight. Determined efforts to salvage the bill provoked opposition from the university's defenders who claimed that it should be the only one in the state.[113] Obviously, a compromise bill was the only possible result in such a heated atmosphere. The board was undaunted by defeat. The weak endowment, as well as the righteousness of its cause, spurred it on.

The Republicans finally gained a majority in 1789, and the trustees were again optimistic. Their friends vowed complete reversal of the Constitutionalist program and a new constitution. The trustees expected that the university's grant would be taken away from the Constitutionalist board and handed to them. But the Republican leaders had to make careful compromises in their counter-revolution, and the efforts of the college lobby were futile.[114] The trustees pressed their case the following year, during constitutional revision, but failed at the last minute. Their bill was left on the calendar when the assembly dissolved itself

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[112] Rush scolded Dickinson for this defection, "in a warm tone," and told him that "prudence when honor was concerned, was a rascally virtue." Rush to Montgomery, November 13, 1784, *Rush Letters,* I, 341–343.

[113] See Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 153–154, 168–169; and a belligerent attack on denominational activities in education in *Freeman's Journal,* January 19, 1785. Flickers of the controversy can be found in *Pennsylvania Gazette,* September 27, 29, 1784, January 26, 1785. See also Aldridge, "Dickinson College and the 'Broad Bottom' of Early Education in Pennsylvania," *Early Dickinsoniana,* pp. 93–114. Rush attempted to defend himself and his college in *Freeman's Journal,* February 23, 1785.

[114] Rush to John Montgomery, March 27, 1789, in *Rush Letters,* I, 509; William Bingham to William Irvine, February 26, 1789, minutes for December 2, 1788, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 215–220.

hurriedly when the new government was proclaimed. Ironically, most of the trustees worked for a dozen years for the change in government that accidentally left the college high and dry.[115]

With admirable fortitude, the board kept after the Assembly. Annual grants of only £500 would bring prosperity, buildings, and a complete faculty. Without state aid, the trustees lived in constant fear that the college would be "knocked in the head."[116] Petitions were carefully prepared and supported by influential trustees. Successive legislatures were at least alerted to the connections among state funds, education, and republican development. A typical petition asserted that "a wide diffusion of knowledge must be deemed the chief pillar of republican stability, and that a republican form of government must ever be endangered when learning is decried" and when the state does not effectively subsidize colleges. But it was all to no avail. The annual grant eluded the board.[117] During this period, however, the state invested extensively in public works and banks to stimulate economic development, especially after the turn of the century.[118] The

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[115] Rush to trustees, September 11, 1790, John Armstrong to Rush, February 18, 1790, Rush Correspondence; John Armstrong to William Irvine, August 13, 1790, Irvine Papers, HSP; Rush to Thomas Smith, February 26, 1790, in *Rush Letters,* I, 537; Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 225–226.

[116] Entry for October 6, 1802, Nathaniel Snowden Diary, HSP.

[117] Quotation from an undated draft petition in James Hamilton's hand, Dickinson College mss. The story of the constant flood of petitions is in the *Carlisle Gazette,* February 5, 1797, January 10, 17, March 7, August 29, 1798, in Trustee minutes, *passim;* in draft petition from the 1790's signed by James Wilson and others, Robert Davidson to James Hamilton, January 13, 1806, John Creigh to Hamilton, January 10, 1806, and George Logue to Andrew Gregg, February 15, 1803, Dickinson College mss. Also, draft petition dated February 20, 1792, John Montgomery to William Irvine, December 19, 1792, February 26, 1793, and March 25, 1795, John Armstrong to William Irvine, March, 1793, and an anonymous Carlisle correspondent to Irvine, December 11, 1797, Irvine Papers, HSP. Thomas Smith to Rush, January 1793, Montgomery to Rush, January 15, 1799, June 10, 1804, James Hamilton to Rush, June 21, 1810, Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, May 21, 1810, Rush Correspondence.

[118] Hartz, *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought in Pennsylvania,* pp. 82–94.

legislature doled out piecemeal grants to the college, a very unsatisfactory arrangement. In 1791, another £1500 was granted in a lump. But instructors' salaries were far in arrears and the money vanished quickly.[119] Democratic parsimony scattered insignificant amounts among new and older institutions founded by various groups. There was neither enough for all nor for any one. Dickinson received the lion's share but it was not sufficient. At the same time, the university languished in as much debt as Dickinson, in spite of the legislature's implied promise of support.[120]

The state's failure to shoulder its share of the burden doomed the trustees to a losing struggle against mounting odds. Liberal government support in some states kept other struggling colleges from going under. Williams College, for example, received fifty thousand dollars from the Massachusetts legislature during the thirty years between 1793 and 1823. This was twice what Dickinson was able to beg. Established schools like Columbia, Harvard, and Yale were also well supported by public funds.[121] Dickinson, however, received only about seven hundred dollars per year during the thirty-three years prior to closing in 1816. This was about a third of the minimum amount required from the state each year in the trustees' budget for full education.[122] The sum was barely sufficient for day-to-day expenses. The trustees were in debt for salary arrears, capital improvements, and old debts that increased with each passing year. By 1800, the board was forced to sell endowment stock for ready cash. John Montgomery, seeing the

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[119] Minutes of November 28, 1791, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[120] Saul Sack, *History of Higher Education in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Collection, 1963) I, 306–309, 62–63, 286–288. Dickinson received the most money, of the fourteen colleges and two universities chartered in Pennsylvania before 1837.

[121] Rudolph, *The American College and University,* pp. 185–187.

[122] This figure includes the board's valuation of the land, and the subsidy payments of 1786, 1791, 1795, 1803, and 1806. Pounds are converted at the standard rate of 4.8 dollars per pound. See financial statement, June 15, 1797, Dickinson College mss. Morgan, in *Dickinson College,* estimates $550 per year, but this does not include the full value of the land grant.

disappearance of the fund that he and other original trustees had collected with so much labor, snorted to Doctor Rush that "they may as well [sell] the college. . . . It is very easy to sell stock but it is not so easy gathering it."[123] The board was nevertheless forced to dribble away the endowment until it was virtually exhausted when the college closed in 1816.[124]

The financial problem of the Dickinson board was not unique. Other plans for education similarly fail because there was not enough social overhead capital available. Other theorists planned to tap new and old sources, but with more ingenuity than success. Jefferson's "bill for the more general diffusion of knowledge" was defeated in 1786 partly because it was too expensive. The national university that Doctor Rush and other educational theorists planned ran into insoluble financial problems.[125] The usual resource available to educators—state or federal land grants to specific schools or to "literary funds," combined with private philanthropy were insufficient.[126] The proliferation of colleges and academies eagerly contending for patronage dissipated available money.[127] The longevity attained by the perseverance of the

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[123] John Montgomery to Rush, May 2, 1801, Rush Correspondence.

[124] Minutes of June 10, September 24, 1800, May 4, September 30, 1801, April 11, 1806, April 30, 1807, September 29, 1808, May 17, 1810, April 2, 1811, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, May 21, July 4, 1810, James Hamilton to Rush, June 21, 1810, Rush Correspondence.

[125] James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, February 15, 1787, December 4, 1786, Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, January 4, 1786, in Julian P. Boyd (ed.), *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950—) XI, 152, X, 576, IX, 151; Edgar B. Wesley, *Proposed: The University of the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952).

[126] Rush Welter, *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York: 1962), pp. 26–27; Richard G. Axt, *The Federal Government and Financing Higher Education* (New York: Columbia University Press 1952).

[127] Rudolph, *The American College and University,* pp. 52–62. McAnear, "The Raising of Funds by the Colonial Colleges," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXXVIII (1952), 611, points out that colonial colleges drew two-thirds of their contributions from their neighborhood, and competition from another college could circumscribe this source drastically.

Dickinson board compares favorably to the high rate of college mortality that resulted.[128]

Dickinson's requests for annual aid owed their failure partly to the partisan animosity that the college aroused. How to remove this animosity, without losing sight of the college's mission of moderation, was the trustees' dilemma. "Unaccommodating principles prevent the accession of support from the public, which are [*sic*] so necessary in such cases," reflected one of them.[129] After failing to block the charter, the Constitutionalists shifted their attack to the charge that the college was the creature of the aristocrats in the Republican faction, and a stronghold of privilege. The college was attacked during the skirmishes that accompanied state ratification of the Federal Constitution, which were especially violent in Carlisle, where a full scale riot developed.[130] The notorious Arch-Federalist attitudes of Principal Nisbet contributed fuel to the controversy. "The antis [antifederalists] consider it a nursery of federals poisoned by Dr. Nisbet . . . and are depreciating learning. They say that it is unnecessary in a commonwealth," reported Colonel Montgomery.[131] The ratification of the Constitution and the revision of the state constitution in 1790 did not bring the college out of the political thickets. The rise of national

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[128] Donald G. Tewsbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War: With Particular Reference to the Religious Influences Bearing on the College Movement* (New York: Teacher's College; 1932), pp. 27–28, 24–25, contains statistics for the entire period before the Civil War that give a clear indication of the high rate of failures for the earlier period considered in my study.

[129] John King to Ashbel Green, November 16, 1801, Gratz Collection, HSP.

[130] John Montgomery to Rush, June 12, 1788, Rush Correspondence; to William Irvine, January 9, 1788, in Irvine Papers, HSP. The excited state of the town can be seen best in the *Carlisle Gazette,* January 2, 9, and 16, 1788, where both sides continued the conflict. There are good accounts of the riots in Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* pp. 210–211, and in Whitfield Bell, "The Other Man on Bingham's Porch," in *"John and Mary's College,"* pp. 47–48.

[131] John Montgomery to Rush, June 12, 1788.

parties in the 1790's continued the rancor between the state factions because the new national parties dovetailed with the two groups already in existence. Most former Constitutionalists became Democratic-Republicans, and former Republicans became Federalists. Heated rivalry in the state resulted when national issues reacted with and underscored state rivalries.[132]

The college remained vulnerable on several counts. The outspoken Dr. Nisbet continued his firm Federalism, in the pulpit of the Presbyterian church in town, where he preached regularly, as well as in the classroom and the streets of Carlisle. Trustee John Linn later admitted that Nisbet's "violence in politics, at a time when little things would offend, contributed to hurt his usefulness and injure the institution."[133] The college was attacked for the reputed anti-democratic doctrines it taught, and because in local democratic rhetoric, education was the province of an élite who used their learning to oppress "the people."[134] Western democrats recorded that they were "dissatisfied with the principles and management of the college." In 1803, an anonymous insurgent charged that "this college has never produced any but high flying aristocrats and virulent enemies of the present government; especially for the last six years."[135] As Federalist strength declined, the college's vulnerability meant that petitions for funds ran into increased opposition. The years after 1796 were lean, with the

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[132] Tinkcom, *Republicans and Federalists,* pp. 52–55, 71, 73.

[133] John Linn to an anonymous correspondent, about 1805, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. See also *Carlisle Gazette,* July 30, October 8, 1800; Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet,* pp. 227–229, 248–251; Joseph Smith, "A Frontier Experiment With Higher Education," in *Bulwark of Liberty,* pp. 94, 97; Charles Nisbet to Charles Wallace, June 2, 1797, in *Bulletin of The New York Public Library,* II (1898), 83.

[134] See *Carlisle Gazette,* September 19, October 17, 1798, May 26, December 8, 1802. Richard Hofstadter examines national ramifications of this mood in his *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: 1963) pp. 151–154. He characterizes it as "primitivistic and anti-intellectualist populism."

[135] *Carlisle Herald,* March 23, 1803, *Carlisle Gazette,* March 23, 1803, March 31, 1802.

result that the endowment was stretched thinner and thinner. Legislative coldness was especially trying.[136]

Perhaps the board should bow a bit before the rising insurgents. Rush thought so, and he tried to exert a moderating influence on the rest of the trustees through John Montgomery.[137] "I lament, deeply lament, the declining state of our college. The cause of it need not be mentioned. Nothing can be done to retrieve its character while *high toned* Federal politics are taught in it," he wrote. Ideally, the college "should be of no party." It would be effective only if abstract principles were taught. Party wrangling only hurt the finances without helping the backcountry students.[138]

In 1803, a major financial disaster wrought the change that Rush advised. The college barely subsisted without state doles after 1795, but the trustees erected a building nevertheless. Construction overstrained the budget, and the final blow came when the building burned in February, 1803. The trustees stared at bankruptcy in the ashes.[139] They must either get money from the legislature to pay for the fire and rebuild, or abandon the college. Sound counsel in the crisis came from Rush in Philadelphia. The board should wring the heartstrings of the legislature with their abject position after this misfortune and play on the "patriotism and humanity" of the Assembly:

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[136] Political opposition to college petitions for money is evident in letters from John Montgomery to William Irvine, February 26, 1793, Irvine Papers, HSP; Andrew Ellicott to Rush, March 21, 1803, Charles Nisbet to Rush, January 15, 1798, Rush Correspondence: Nisbet to Alexander Addison, January 31, February 23, 1797, April 5, 1798, Darlington Memorial Library, University of Pittsburgh. See also *Carlisle Gazette,* October 5, 1803, and *Carlisle Herald,* March 2, 23, 1803.

[137] Rush moved into the Jeffersonian column early, in reaction to Hamiltonian extremism in economics. "I consider federalism and republicanism as synonymous, but many people mean by federalism the monarchy of Great Britain," he wrote to John Dickinson, October 11, 1797, Logan Papers, HSP. See also Rush to James Madison, April 10, 1790, to Thomas Fitzsimmons, August 5, 1790, in *Rush Letters,* I, 543, 569, 541n.

[138] Rush to John Montgomery, June 6, 1801, June 27, 1799, *ibid.,* II, 832.

[139] Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 87–93.

> Let a petition be composed and addressed to them immediately and let the Governor be requested to accompany it with a recommendation. There is not an hour to be lost in this business. If our rulers cannot think, they can feel. By delay, their sympathy may cool.

Rush concluded his advice with an unintentional quip that the stricken local men could hardly have thought funny. "Let us strike while the iron is hot."[140] The trustees approached the legislature like chastened suitors. Their imperative need and Rush's advice that the college would fail "unless some pains are taken to remove the prejudices excited against it among the republican party in the western country," taught accommodation.[141] The legislators were touched. A loan of six thousand dollars was extended, against a mortgage on the college's land grant as security. The sum was later made an outright grant in exchange for the useless land.[142] Public money was supplemented with a wide appeal to the charity of all citizens by the reinvigorated trustees. The board was able to erect an even bigger building, now West College, designed *gratis* by Benjamin Latrobe.[143]

The trustees' sense of responsibility purged their image to make it more acceptable in the changing backcountry. The Jeffersonian legislator who was prevailed on to bring in the college's petition was impressed. The fire seemed to have purified Dickinson College, he confided to another Republican. "I am in great

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[140] Rush to John Montgomery, February 11, 1803, in *Rush Letters,* II, 855.

[141] Rush to Montgomery, January 9, 1802, Rush Correspondence.

[142] The law was passed on March 24, 1803, *Carlisle Gazette,* June 1, 1803; Sack, *Higher Education in Pennsylvania* I, 64.

[143] The board solicited the Carlisle Presbytery, sent agents to Washington, D. C., and points south, to Philadelphia and Delaware, and urged former subscribers to pay up. Minutes of March 14, September 28, 1803, April 11, 1804, Trustee minutes; and reports from James Hamilton and John Campbell, 1804, and Robert Cathcart, Dickinson College mss. Minutes of the Carlisle Presbytery, April 12, October 4, 1803, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; John Montgomery to Rush, June 22, 1803, Rush to Montgomery, June 10, 1804, Rush Correspondence. The building project is described in Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 91–95, and the authoritative article by Paul Norton, "Latrobe and Old West at Dickinson College," *Art Bulletin,* XXXIII (1951), 125–132.

hopes that the college will be a very useful institution in a short time, as the trustees are resolved to have republican principles instilled into the minds of the youth; which was not the case some time ago."[144] Even Dr. Nisbet, now an elderly man and concerned about his salary, fell in with the spirit of reconciliation and publicly waved the olive branch.[145] The board invited candid examination of the lectures on politics, and Editor Kline of the *Carlisle Gazette* was called in as official Republican censor. He reported that the lectures were inoffensive. They even "afford reason in many parts for praise," announced Mr. Kline.[146] The *rapprochement* between the college and the local Republican organization reached its zenith in 1804, in party rhetoric at least, at the annual Independence Day clambake in Carlisle. Former critics toasted "Arts and Sciences—may none but *their friends* enter the temple of legislation."[147]

The trustees did not exactly sell their birthright for a mess of pottage when they accepted their new responsibility to society. Their birthright, the Federalist Party, evaporated by 1803 in the backcountry. The board was simply accommodating itself to this regrettable fact. The election of a Republican governor in 1799 and of Jefferson in 1800 dealt the party a decisive blow locally. Federalist ineptitude in national and state disputes, together with superior Republican organization and strategy, reversed the Federalist trend in the nation, the state, and in Cumberland County.[148]

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[144] George Logue to Andrew Gregg, February 15, 1803, Dickinson College mss.

[145] *Carlisle Gazette,* October 5, 1803.

[146] *Ibid.,* March 23, 1803: *Carlisle Herald,* March 2, 1803.

[147] *Carlisle Gazette,* July 6, 1804. This is the first such toast by the Carlisle organization. These toasts, faithfully reported in the newspapers, are a fairly reliable index to party ideology in a given year.

[148] Editor Kline, whose paper went Republican in 1798, documented the trend with evident relish. In 1798, he reported, the Federalists polled a majority of 516 in Cumberland County. This lead shrank to 364 the following year. The tide turned in 1800, when the Republicans gained a majority of 712. In 1801, their majority increased to 889. He felt it safe to say that the Federalist party

Politically active trustees in Cumberland County followed the accepted strategy of others in the state Federalist Party and quietly joined the more conservative Republican faction.[149]

The college was still unable to get the annual grant, but at least the trustees managed to get a full share of the meager legislative appropriation for education. The board competed with other institutions and waited until a combination of adroit politicking and fiscal hardship loosened the purse strings.[150] There was a hopeful sign for the optimists who chose to find it. Opposition to state grants, while still strong, was fragmented and less solidly partisan. The reasons for legislative parsimony were listed by Principal Atwater in a letter written in 1810. Opponents acted "from local interest, prejudice against literature,—from a wish to favor common schools and academies rather than colleges, from the numerous applications of a similar kind made to the legislature, and finally, from political considerations."[151] Trustee self-restraint restored the college to its place in society. The board still begged

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was defunct. *Carlisle Gazette,* October 28, 1801. Tinkcom, in *Republicans and Federalists,* analyzed the reasons for Republican victory in the state, see especially pp. 271–273. Continued Federalist decline is shown in Sanford W. Higginbotham, *Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics, 1800–1816* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1952), *passim.*

[149] In 1805, for example, James Hamilton, John Creigh, Doctor McCoskry, Charles McClure, William Alexander, and Hugh H. Brackenridge supported the "constitutional republican" or "tertium quid" faction of the incumbent Governor McKean against the more radical Democratic Republican faction that supported Simon Snyder. *Carlisle Gazette,* August 2, September 13, 20, October 1, 4, 18, 1805; and Higginbotham, *Keystone in the Democratic Arch,* pp. 63, 95–96, 99–101.

[150] Thus, in 1806, the Carlisle trustees successfully guided a bill through the house that granted $4,000 outright, and liberally adjusted the mortgage on the earlier loan. They failed in 1810, however, when they gambled for an outright grant rather than exchanging their land grant for cash. Robert Davidson to James Hamilton, January 13, 1806, John Creigh to Hamilton, January 10, 1806, Dickinson College mss; Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, January 17, February 14, April 22, 1810, December 27, 1809, James Hamilton to Rush, May 21, June 21, 1810, Rush Correspondence. See Sack, *Higher Education in Pennsylvania,* I, 307, for comment on the haphazard state system.

[151] Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, January 17, 1810, Rush Correspondence.

the uncertain favor of the legislature, but it would beg with the voice of respectability. The college failed financially in 1816 because there was not enough social overhead capital for colleges.

Trustee influence in Carlisle also extended into the classroom. The record here must be examined because criticism in its own day and in the recent past has been levelled at this aspect of the board's trusteeship.[152] The trustees planned to combine traditional elements of the eighteenth century curriculum with the new subjects thought necessary in the new republic. Responsibility for planning the curriculum was delegated to Benjamin Rush, who was full of ideas about necessary reforms, and to Principal-elect Nisbet, who was to arrive from Scotland.[153] Nisbet fell ill, however, and Rush went ahead alone.[154] The others accepted most of his ideas in August, 1785.[155] He advised the addition of German to the classical languages, the formal study of English, as the American language, and of French in response to pro-French sentiment in the country immediately after the Revolution. Geography and Chemistry were recommended to help Americans understand and exploit their natural environment. The rest was standard eighteenth century

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[152] Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 131–144; Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet,* p. 340.

[153] The committee charged with this responsibility consisted of Rush, James Wilson, and John Montgomery, but it is certain that Rush did most, if not all, of the planning. Wilson was a silent trustee, and Montgomery's talents were in directions other than curriculum planning. Minutes of April 7, 1784, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Rush to trustees, May 23, 1785, in Rush Letters, I, 354.

[154] *Ibid.,* trustees to Charles Nisbet, September 29, 1784, in Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Rush and Nisbet probably discussed at least the general outlines while Nisbet stayed with the Doctor in Philadelphia before coming to Carlisle in the summer of 1785. Rush did not see Nisbet at all during his visit to Carlisle for the meeting in August 1785, at which the plan was cast in its final form.

[155] "Plan of education in Dickinson College," accepted by the board on August 10, 1785, minutes of that date, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Most of the manuscript plan is in Rush's hand, but there are deletions and additions in two other hands. These changes are rather minor, and were the result of careful and thorough discussion in the meeting.

curriculum.[156] These innovations were typical of the changes that would sweep most American colleges after the Revolution. By the early 1790's, Harvard and Columbia taught all the new subjects that he suggested, and his *alma mater,* Princeton, would join the other two by 1802.[157] Even before the Revolution, William Smith's broader and more utilitarian curriculum at the College of Philadelphia broke the Colonial pattern.[158]

A faculty of five was needed for the curriculum, plus several teachers for the preparatory school attached to the college.[159] These salaries would strain even a strong budget.[160] Precarious finances contracted the scope. The board was able to maintain only a core of four in both the college and the preparatory school. For the first twenty years, Principal Nisbet taught moral philosophy, metaphysics, and logic, and complained that he was doing the work of two. The Reverend Robert Davidson taught history, chronology, rhetoric, belles lettres, and natural philosophy, with better grace but less dash. Davidson spanned three of Rush's professorships, and also served as full time pastor in the local Presbyterian church. There was also a professor of mathematics, and the preparatory

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156 "Plan of education in Dickinson College," *ibid.*

157 Louis F. Snow, *The College Curriculum in the United States* (New York: 1907), pp. 82–93, 97–102: John Maclean, *History of the College of New Jersey* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), II, 63–66, 57–59, 72–73.

158 Sack, *Higher Education in Pennsylvania,* I, 270–727; Snow, *The College Curriculum,* p. 66, makes rather extravagant claims for the importance of Smith's plan.

159 Rush projected a principal and four professors. One would teach natural philosophy and mathematics, another history and belles lettres, and one each in classical and modern languages. The preparatory school would be staffed with a classicist, an arithmetic master, and an English teacher, at least. "Plan of education in Dickinson College," Dickinson College mss. Rush to John Montgomery, May 3, 1784, April 17, 1785, Rush Correspondence.

160 Rush hoped that two of his instructors would find partial support in the Episcopalian and German Reformed congregations in Carlisle. Principal Nisbet and Professor Davidson had such arrangements with the local Presbyterian congregation. Rush to Montgomery, May 3, 1784, Thomas Smith to Rush, January 23, 1785, Rush Correspondence.

school master was "humanist" in the college.[161] In contrast, Princeton required a president, four professors, several tutors, and a teacher of French for its expanded curriculum. Columbia maintained eight professors in the arts faculty, and the University of Pennsylvania needed six men.[162] Dickinson could hardly afford even four. Salaries were soon far in arrears, despite some ingenious fiscal measures, and were finally reduced substantially in 1801 to fit the shrinking budget.[163]

Despite financial problems, the trustees tried to provide curricular innovations. Rush sent them a Chemist, but he was judged incompetent. Davidson declined to add Chemistry to his vast province of knowledge, despite Rush's promptings from Philadelphia.[164] After a fiasco with a German self-styled Chemist, the board finally secured a first-rate scientist when Thomas Cooper was hired in 1811.[165] English and oratory instruction was also a

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[161] Charles Nisbet to James Paton, January 10, 1787, in Miller, *Memoir of Nisbet,* p. 168; Robert Davidson, "State of Dickinson College," dated May 10, 1786, Dickinson College mss; Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 98–104, 110–117, 107.

[162] Snow, *College Curriculum,* pp. 97–102; Maclean, *History of New Jersey College,* II, 62, 66; Sack, *Higher Education in Pennsylvania,* I, 288.

[163] These included lottery tickets in lieu of full salary, which recipients could either sell, or hold. There was also a reluctant resolution that junior faculty members collect their own salary from delinquent subscribers. Minutes for December 2, 1788, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College Mss; John Montgomery to Rush, August 3, 1790, Rush Correspondence; *Morgan, Dickinson College,* pp. 118–119, 122, 124, 127–128. For the reduction, see minutes for November 19, 1801, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College Mss. The language professor and the mathematics were removed from salary status, and granted a proportion of student fees instead.

[164] Robert Davidson, "State of Dickinson College," dated May 10, 1786, minutes for June 15, 1785, May 10, 1786, April 11, 1787, Trustee minutes, *ibid.* Davidson to trustees, 1787, Dreer Collection, HSP; Rush to John Montgomery, April 12, 1785, Robert Davidson to Rush, December 13, 1808, Rush Correspondence.

[165] See Whitfield Bell, "Thomas Cooper as Professor of Chemistry at Dickinson College, 1811–1815," *Journal of The History of Medicine and Allied Sciences,* VIII (1953), 70–86.

problem. Rush sent a young Scot, but his burr disqualified him after a year.[166] Negotiations for a replacement were inconclusive, and the subject eventually devolved on the willing Davidson.[167] Rush advocated a German instructor, to teach Germans in their own language and to teach the language to others in the college. Dickinson College had a mandate to develop civic virtue in the Germans, he insisted. "The influence of our college, if properly directed, might reform them and show them that men should live for other purposes than simply to cultivate the Earth and to accumulate specie." The board considered the idea carefully, but was unable to act on it.[168] The project was shelved with the founding of Franklin College under German auspices, in nearby Lancaster. Twenty-five years later, however, the board hired a

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[166] Rush hoped that republican education would stress the American language and not the traditional classical ones. "Too much [*sic*] pains cannot be taken to teach our youth to read and write our American language with propriety and elegance," he wrote in an essay intended for the board, in Rush, *Essays,* pp. 15–16; Rush to John Montgomery, March 9, 1784. Rush read the essay at the board meeting of April 8, 1784, and two trustees were requested to "exercise the scholars now learning the languages, in the knowledge of the English tongue." On June 15, 1785, the board decided to establish a more permanent arrangement, in words that follow Rush too closely for coincidence. It was "resolved to provide a person capable of teaching to write and read the English language with propriety and elegance." Minutes for April 8, 1784, June 15, 1785, August 9, 10, 11, May 10, 1786, Dickinson College mss. Rush to Montgomery, December 28, 1785, in *Rush Letters,* I, 378. The young Scot, whose name was Robert Tait, told his side of the story in a letter to Rush, May 20, 1786, and see also Rush to Montgomery, June 27, 1785, Rush Correspondence.

[167] Rush to trustees, April, 1786, in *Rush Letters,* I, 382, minutes for May 6, 10, 1786, Trustee minutes. Dickinson College mss. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* May 31, 1786; Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 106, 117.

[168] Quotation from Rush to trustees, May 23, 1785, in *Rush Letters,* I, 353. Rush began pressure for a German faculty member early, Rush to Montgomery, May 3, 1784, Rush Correspondence. The board considered the proposal, but tabled it. Minutes of June 15, 1785, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Rush's idea was not so radical in eastern Pennsylvania, for there was a precedent in the university. A German preparatory school and a German professor were established there in 1779, at the insistence of the German ministers on the reconstituted board. Cheyney, *University of Pennsylvania,* pp. 132–133; Frederic Shriver Klein, *The Spiritual and Educational Background of Franklin and Marshall College* (Lancaster: Commercial Printing House, 1939), pp. 20–22.

German scientist with the condition that he might teach German "if deemed expedient."[169] In 1810, another innovation finally occurred when the board appointed a teacher of French, Spanish, and Italian.[170] Halting progress due to lack of funds does not obscure the fact that the trustees tried to bring a reformed curriculum to Dickinson. Their interference was exerted in the direction taken by the best standards of their day.

The other classroom problem that confronted the board was the question of the proper amount of time necessary for a student to become a bachelor of arts. Rush's original plan specified the usual four-year course of the Colonial college.[171] Weak finances, however, dictated a long struggle for a four-year college course. The college began with concessions to poverty and expediency. The faculty suggested three classes in the college, and a fourth in the preparatory school. Not even this modest beginning was feasible, however, and the students remained undifferentiated. The trustees wanted results, and directed that the faculty select a group for commencement in May, 1787. The faculty reported that it had tried, but could not in conscience recommend graduates on schedule.[172] The haphazard organization threatened to become permanent. During the first two decades college classes remained undifferentiated, and the faculty merely selected a class of graduates each year.[173]

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[169] Minutes of September 10, 1810, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[170] He was promoted to "professor of modern languages," in 1814, although his only remuneration would be student fees. It was also specified at this time that the study of modern languages was not a degree requirement. Minutes of November 1810, September 30, 1814, Trustee minutes, in *ibid.; Carlisle Gazette,* August 3, 1810.

[171] Each student would advance or remain in place after a quarterly examination. "Plan of education in Dickinson College," Dickinson College mss.

[172] *Pennsylvania Gazette,* June 27, 1787; Robert Davidson, "State of Dickinson College," May 10, 1786, and minutes for November 1786, and April 10, 1787, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[173] A class usually graduated every year, but there was no attempt to differentiate one class from another, except at commencement, during the first two decades. The board directed the faculty to divide the students into three classes

The trustees regarded lack of formal organization as a catastrophe. The struggling college was handicapped by a poor reputation that kept away students, tuition money, and donations.[174] Reputable American colleges expected students to finish a four-year course, and Dickinson's three years was hardly respectable. Yale, Columbia, Harvard, the College of Rhode Island, and Princeton were all four-year colleges.[175] The board was determined to cloak the college with respectability and regularity. The apathy of the overburdened faculty was one cause that might be remedied. The trustees pressed them to adhere to the regulations set by the board.[176] In 1796, a new scheme was drawn up that required the faculty to separate the students into three classes, with preparatory students as a fourth. The board's announcement that these changes firmly established Dickinson's reputation was premature.[177] A new

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by examination, but this was not done. Minutes of April 27, 1796, Trustee minutes *ibid.*

[174] There is an observable curve in the number of graduates. From 1787, the first class, to 1809, the average class numbered 9.2, but there was a dramatic decline after 1798. From 1787 to 1798, the average was 12.6; from 1799 to 1809, the average was only 6. Extrapolated from class records in *Alumni Record, Dickinson College,* George Reed (comp.) (Carlisle: Dickinson College, 1905). Other sources confirm the trend. In January, 1798, there were only seventy students in the college. In May, 1801, only forty, and in October, 1802, only twenty-four. *Carlisle Gazette,* January 10, 1798, John Montgomery to Rush, May 4, 1801, Rush Correspondence; entry for October 6, 1802, Nathaniel Snowden Diary, HSP.

[175] Snow, *College Curriculum,* pp. 79–129; Maclean, *History of New Jersey College,* II, 63–65, 204–206.

[176] Rush to trustees, October 21, 1786, in *Rush Letters,* I, 397. The trustees claimed that the college's decline was due to poor discipline and organization. John Montgomery to Rush, July 28, September 10, 1801, Rush Correspondence; John Linn to an anonymous correspondent, about 1804, John Linn Papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; minutes of April 17, 1794, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. Rush was the instigator in the beginning, and after 1790 James Hamilton applied the spur. Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, February 12, 1803, Darlington Memorial Library, University of Pittsburgh.

[177] "Regulation of classes in Dickinson College," adopted by the board, April 27, 1796, and minutes of May 26, 1795, trustee minutes. The best picture of what the trustees were attempting is a long letter from Principal Nisbet to the

factor appeared to plague the trustees. The students rebelled by threatening to leave *en masse* unless they were guaranteed a degree in a single year. Their case was shrewdly based on the trustee requirement for annual commencements, and the fact that they were not differentiated. Principal Nisbet tried to resist, but the trustees, threatened by other pressures in the late 1790's, gave in to the student rebels. For three years, 1799 to 1802, Dickinsonians graduated in one year.[178]

The humiliating compromise did not please any one except the rebellious students. As soon as the leaders of the rebellion had been graduated, and things had quieted down, the trustees again established a two-year course in the college. Dr. Davidson recommended this compromise at the beginning of the revolt, and he continued it after he succeeded Nisbet in 1804 as principal *pro tempore*.[179] In 1809, with the arrival of Principal Atwater, the trustees lengthened the amount of time spent in college. James Hamilton wrote to Rush that he was well satisfied with the new principal, the faculty, and the curriculum. The only problem was the short course. "The students are hurried through the courses, particularly towards the close of their education, with the velocity

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board, answering their charges and stating his own views. Dickinson College mss. The proposed changes are advertized in the *Carlisle Gazette*, January 25, March 15, 29, October 4, 1797, and January 10, 1798.

[178] The best account is in Nisbet's letter to Rush, November 12, 1803, Rush Correspondence; and to the board, July 29, 1799. The board's minutes are silent on the incident, but trustee passiveness is shown in minutes of September 25, 1799, and April 23, 1800. At the first meeting an investigating committee was named to see whether the rules should be changed. Nisbet and Professor Davidson reported to the committee, and Davidson recommended a two-year course. The board took no action. Robert Davidson to trustees, December 4, 1799, and Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[179] Robert Davidson to trustees, January 13, 1797, James Hamilton to Charles Nisbet, January 14, 1797, James Ross to trustees, October 18, 1802, Robert Davidson to trustees, "Present state of Dickinson College and some hints respecting a temporary plan for conducting the business of this institution," April 10, 1784, minutes of October 7, November 29, 1802, September 29, 1809, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss. See *Carlisle Gazette*, December 8, 1802, February 8, 1804, and May 10, 1805.

disproportionate to their powers of acquisition." Hamilton was determined to correct this, lest the college gain a reputation for "superficial scholars."[180] Increased numbers and a vigorous principal made further differentiation possible. There were three college classes by 1811. The board took the final step when it directed that a fourth class be established in the fall of 1814.[181] The resolution was probably never acted on, however, for the college closed soon after, with an empty treasury and faculty resignations.[182]

The trustees' uneven record in the classroom should not obscure their comparative success. Rush's original suggestions matched those of forward looking theorists of his time, and persevering trustees and overburdened faculty left a satisfactory record of achieving many of them. Dickinson may have been unequal to the four year course of most well-established colleges, but it compares favorably with newer ones. Jefferson College, founded in western Pennsylvania in 1802, followed a three year course until 1820, and Washington College, founded in 1806 in the same area, continued with undifferentiated students until 1824.[183] The University of Pennsylvania, which declined after the reorganization of 1791, crammed its curriculum into two years

[180] James Hamilton to Rush, December 11, 1811, February 2, 1812, Rush Correspondence.

[181] *Catalogue of the Faculty and Students of Dickinson College,* broadside, dated December, 1811, copy in Rush Correspondence; minutes of March 29, 1814, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[182] The details of the dying struggle are in Morgan, *Dickinson College,* pp. 203–240. The college closed in September, 1816, after a confused session presided over by the aged Reverend John McKnight, as an emergency principal. It remained closed for several years, although the board met several times. Minutes of September 16, 1816, Trustee minutes, Dickinson College mss.

[183] Rudolph, *The American College and University,* pp. 40–42; and Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith (eds.), *American Higher Education, A Documentary History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), I, 167–170, for an elaborate curriculum planned for a state university in 1795. Snow, *College Curriculum,* pp. 78–143, contains an encyclopedic discussion of comparative curricula during the era.

until 1810, over faculty protest.[184] Transylvania Seminary (or University) in Lexington, Kentucky, affords a comparison. Transylvania was founded in the same year as Dickinson, but found it impossible to hold students for more than a year until 1815, or to approach Dickinson's wide curriculum.[185]

From the perspective of the plans and achievements of thirty years, the active trustees were faithful stewards. They aimed to do good, in Rush's phrase, for the rising generation in the backcountry. Their plans and intentions were benevolent, and their achievements were not negligible. Without enough of the state money that they counted on, they managed to operate the college continuously for thirty-three years. Without an adequate faculty, they struggled to imitate the best colleges, and very nearly succeeded. When their 1783 moderation hardened into abrasive Federalist intransigence in 1800, they tried to soften the hostility against the college instead of abdicating their responsibility. Inevitably, there were mistakes. Perhaps they planned too optimistically in 1782. Perhaps they vacillated before student rebellion and financial pressure in the 1790's. But for thirty-three years a small group of them tried to serve society in the crucial years of the early republic, and to preserve the values they thought best and educate against what they thought destructive.

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184 Sack, *Higher Education in Pennsylvania,* I, 70, 74, 290–291.

185 Transylvania was also founded by a combination of Presbyterians and local politicians to bring learning to the west, and financed by a similar combination of public and private funds. The curriculum was supposed to be the usual wide one, at least in the planning stage. There was, however, more dissension among the trustees there, and more difficulty in finding an able president there. Walter Jennings, *Transylvania, Pioneer University of the West* (New York: 1955), pp. 3–98.

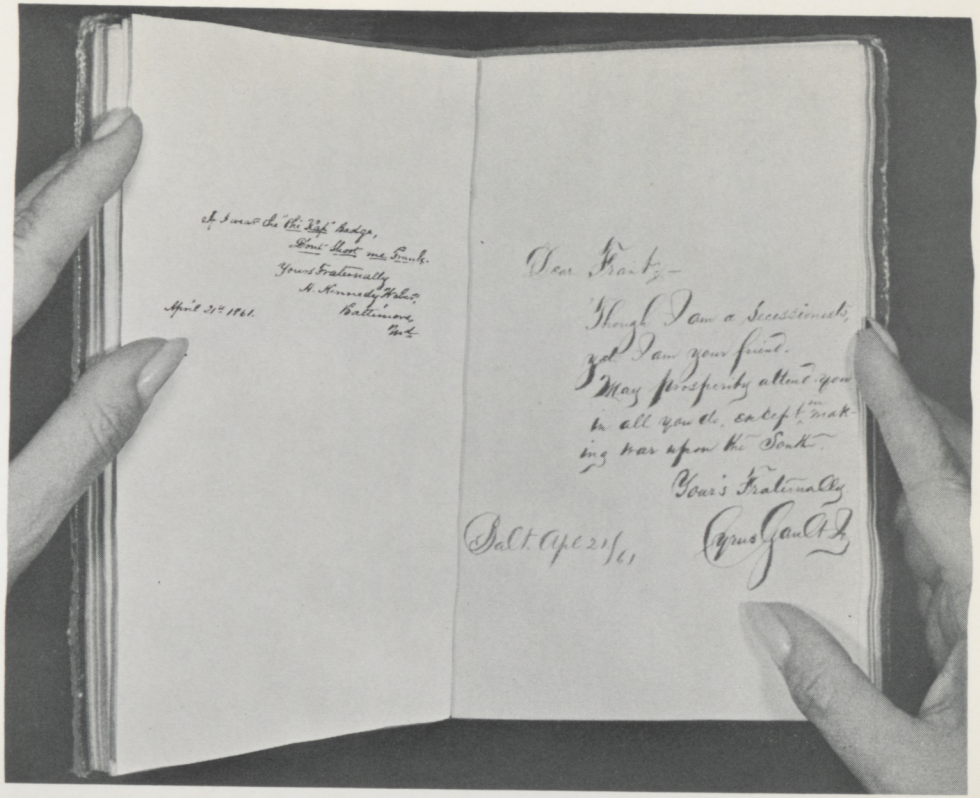
JOHNNY REB *and* BILLY YANK

BELL IRVIN WILEY

February 24, 1967

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A long series of works, scholarly, sensitive and entertaining, have made Bell Wiley a preeminent authority on the American Civil War. His SOUTHERN NEGROES, 1861–1865, *appeared in 1938, his* LIFE OF JOHNNY REB: COMMON SOLDIER OF THE CONFEDERACY, *in 1943, and its companion piece,* THE LIFE OF BILLY YANK, *in 1952. He was a member of President Eisenhower's Civil War Centennial Commission, and in 1964 published his* ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SOUTHERNERS AT WAR. *At the time of his lecture he had just returned to the faculty of Emory University from a year at Oxford as Harmsworth Professor of American History.*



PARTING SENTIMENTS, 1861
From the graduation album of
Francis B. Sellers, *Class of 1861*
Spahr Library

JOHNNY REB *and* BILLY YANK

IT IS a genuine pleasure to be in Carlisle and on the Dickinson campus. In fraternizing with you Pennsylvania Yankees in Carlisle and vicinity I am following a pattern set by Rebels a little more than a century ago. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, according to an article, "Dickinson College and the Civil War," kindly loaned to me by its author, Professor Milton E. Flower, 49 of the college's 116 students were Southerners. Your distinguished librarian, Dr. Charles Coleman Sellers, kindly sent me facsimiles of some pages from the album of Francis B. Sellers Dickinson class of 1861 and a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. On April 21, 1861, a week after the surrender of Fort Sumter, a student from Baltimore wrote in Sellers' album: "Dear Frank—Though I am a Secessionist, yet I am your friend. May prosperity attend you in all you do, except in making war upon the South." I liked that. Another Rebel student wrote in the album: "If I wear the Phi Kap badge, don't shoot me, Frank."

Among the Rebels who attended Dickinson in pre-war years was Thomas Nelson Conrad, class of 1857, who apparently served the Confederacy both as chaplain and spy. The original edition of his book, *The Rebel Scout,* published in 1904, has been on my "want list" for many years.

One of my most cherished possessions is a copy of Johnson's *Common School Arithmetic* published in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1864. Among the problems that it poses for solution by young Southern students is this: "If one Confederate soldier can whip 7 Yankees, how many soldiers can whip 49 Yankees?" This accords with the sentiment expressed by a Dickinson student from South Carolina who wrote in his diary on April 16, 1861: "Ft. Sumter is taken. . . . This act has stird the 'North' who is now rallying . . . with determination and intent to put down the 'rebels' and 'drive secessionism cowering back to the dark corners of S.C.' Let them come we say."

When Rebel soldiers—North Carolinians and Georgians—first came to Carlisle in late June, 1863, on Lee's Gettysburg compaign, one of the Southerners, Walter D. McAdoo, broke rank and rushed toward Howard Keyworth standing on the sidewalk and exclaimed: "Howard, Howard, old chum." These two men had been schoolmates at Dickinson in 1861 and both were members of Sigma Chi. McAdoo and other Rebs visited Dickinson boys in their rooms in East College. They had a good time. I have found no record of the Dickinson boys serving their visitors the beverage which Rebs called "Oh Be Joyful," but Glenn Tucker in his splendid book on Gettysburg states that Rebel Private Joe Duncan found a barrel of whisky hid in a haystack near the campus, and that many of the Southerners *got tight*—and the phrase had wide usage in Civil War times. Among the inebriated was Brigadier General Alfred Iverson of Georgia, who had been stationed at Carlisle Barracks before the war. One Reb said that Iverson was still under the influence of liquor two days later, and this soldier attributed Lee's defeat to whisky found at Carlisle. This raises the interesting question: was the drenching of Rebs with Northern liquor at Carlisle a sneaky Yankee trick?

There was more of fraternizing than of fighting at Carlisle in 1863. As most of you know, some of "Jeb" Stuart's cavalrymen engaged troops of W. F. "Baldy" Smith on the evening of July

1 and in the bombardment that ensued one shell struck South College and another hit some windows of an East College lecture room. But no one was killed and damage was relatively light.

Even in making a speech here in Pennsylvania, I am following a precedent set by Confederates on their visit in 1863. At York, Rebel General William Smith (called "Extra Billy" because of supplementary payments he had received as a hustling mail contractor before the war), former governor of Virginia, could not resist making a speech to residents who assembled to hear the Southern band that came marching into town playing "Dixie" but which at Smith's direction soon switched to "Yankee Doodle." In the grand fashion of the Southern orator Smith said: "My friends, how do you like this way of coming back into the Union? I hope you like it; I have been in favor of it for a good while. . . . We are not here with any hostile intent. . . . We are not burning your houses or butchering your children. On the contrary, we are behaving ourselves like Christian gentlemen, as we are. You see, it was getting a little warm down our way. We needed a summer outing and thought we would take it at the north instead of patronizing the Virginia springs, as we generally do." Smith was applauded by both the Rebel soldiers and the Pennsylvania citizens. About this time, according to Major Robert Stiles who reported the incident, Smith's superior, General Jubal Early, rode up, grabbed the back of the speaker's coat collar and yelled, "General Smith, what the devil are you about, stopping the head of this column in this cursed town?"

Good-naturedly Smith replied, "Having a little fun, General."

And that is what I am doing tonight.

* * *

Most of my research and writing of the past thirty years has been focused on Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, the common soldiers of the Civil War. I have been interested in them mainly as representatives of the lowly folk who have always comprised the overwhelming majority of our population, but who have been

grossly neglected in the history books. My curiosity about the plain people and their role in the nation's past led me to the record of their participation in the Civil War. Nearly three million of them were involved in that war and for the first time in our history this class wrote letters in large numbers. In ordinary times few of them were away from home long enough to require correspondence with relatives and friends. Rarely did they save the few letters written in times of peace. But because the Civil War was by far the most important episode in their humble lives, they saved the letters written during that period, especially those written by the soldiers. Yanks and Rebs were stimulated by seeing new country and having exciting experiences to write at considerable length of their activities and impressions. They were uninhibited by censorship because Civil War officers rarely if ever made any attempt to check on the correspondence of their men.

Over the years most of the extant Civil War correspondence has been collected in public depositories, though a substantial amount still remains in private possession.

During the course of my research it has been my privilege to read more than ten thousand letters written by Johnny Rebs and well over twice that number written by the men in blue. From these fascinating documents I have learned much about the common soldiers and the class from which they came. I want to share this information with you.

Most Civil War soldiers were native Americans. About ninety-five percent of the Confederates and about three-fourths of the Federals were born in the United States. Of foreign-born soldiers the Germans and the Irish were the most numerous. This was because of the heavy immigration of those groups in the years preceding the Civil War. The Union forces contained about 200,000 Germans, 150,000 Irishmen, 50,000 Englishmen, 50,000 Canadians and lesser numbers of Scandinavians, French, Italians and other nationalities. Some Union camps were a Babel of tongues. One regiment, the 39th New York, contained natives of fifteen coun-

tries; Colonel Frederick Utassy, a Hungarian, gave commands in seven languages. The 15th Wisconsin Regiment contained 128 men whose first name was "Ole." The foreigners added color and variety to camp life by singing their native songs, celebrating their festive days, eating their native foods and drinking their native liquors. St. Patrick's Day was always a lively occasion in Irish units, featuring footraces, jumping contests and other athletic events. Whisky flowed freely and before night guard houses were full of inebriates, some with bruised limbs, black eyes and broken noses.

Among Confederates the Irish, numbering perhaps as many as twenty thousand, were the most numerous. Most of them were from the larger towns and cities. Confederate ranks also contained a sprinkling of French, Germans, Italians and other non-Americans.

Of native Americans one of the most important groups were the Negroes, about 200,000 of whom donned the Union blue. They were subjected to much discrimination in pay and equipment, and in their associations with white comrades. They had to perform a disproportionate amount of labor and garrison duty, but some of them got into combat and at Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, Fort Wagner, the Crater and other engagements they gave a good account of themselves.

Another distinctive group were the Indians. Three brigades of red men, mostly Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles, served on the Confederate side and one brigade, principally Creeks, wore the Union blue. Stand Watie, a Cherokee chief, became a Confederate brigadier general. Muster rolls of Indian units in the National Archives contain some colorful names, including Privates "Sweet Caller," "Hog Shooter," "Hog Toter," "Big Mush," "Flying Bird," and Lieutenant "Jumper Duck." At Wilson's Creek and Pea Ridge the Rebel yell of pale faces was blended with the savage whoop of red men. In the fight at Honey Springs in 1864 Yankee Indians fought Rebel Indians. There, as elsewhere, officers had difficulty with the Indians, some of whom

insisted on scalping enemy casualties. The red men were brave fighters, but between battles they were poor soldiers, owing largely to boredom and aversion to discipline.

Civil War soldiers were predominantly rural. On descriptive rolls nearly half of those on the Union side listed their occupation as farmer, and well over half of those on the Confederate side. Going away to war was an exciting experience for the country boys. J. B. Lance, a rustic Tar Heel, after traveling from his native Buncombe County to Charleston, South Carolina, early in the war wrote home: "Father I have saw a rite smart of the world Sence I left home But I have not Saw any place like Buncomb and Henderson yet." Many of the country recruits got their first train ride enroute to camp. A rural Yank from Urbana, Ohio, wrote a friend shortly after reaching Maryland: "Frank since I saw you last I hav seen the elephant. . . . We past through some of the damdes plases ever saw by mortel eyes. We run under som of the god dames hills it was as dark as the low regeons of hell. We past through one tunel too miles long. . . . As we was passing from tunelton to New Crick the cars run onto a stone that would weigh 500 lbs. it was put on the tracks by rebels it was just whair the track runs close to the river if the engen had not bin so hevy we would hav all went to hell in a pile or some other seaport."

Soldiers varied greatly in age. Charles Carter Hay joined an Alabama regiment in 1861 when he was eleven years old and when he surrendered four years later he lacked one month of being fifteen. The very young were usually drummer boys, though many sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds performed the full duty of soldiers. The oldest Confederate apparently was E. Pollard whose age is listed in company records as 73. Out of curiosity I looked up his file in the National Archives and I discovered without surprise that he was discharged, after a brief service, for old age and rheumatism. The oldest Yank was Curtis King, age 80, who served from November 1862 to March 1863 before being discharged for disability. He belonged to the 37th Iowa, a regiment organized

for non-combatant duty and known as "The Graybeards." In its ranks were 145 men sixty or more years old. But most soldiers were neither very old nor very young. Eighteen-year-olds were the largest single age group and men between eighteen and thirty comprised about three-fourths of the soldiers on both sides.

As a general rule the common soldiers were poorly educated. One half of the enlisted men in some Confederate companies could not write their names and many companies had an illiteracy rate of twenty-five percent. Illiteracy was less common in the Union army because the Northern states made much better provision for public education than did those of the South. But even on the Union side, that company which did not have from one to a half-dozen illiterates was unusual.

In both armies spelling and grammar left much to be desired. Spelling was frequently phonetic. A Yank of McClellan's command, writing early in 1862 after the Army of the Potomac was broken up into corps, stated: "They are deviding the army up into corpses." A Reb who participated in the unsuccessful defense of Vicksburg wrote after the battle of Champion's Hill: "The Yankees almost anahighlated us."

One day while reading a group of Confederate letters I came across the statement, "I had the camp diary a few days ago." I was puzzled, because I had not encountered previously any indication of Civil War organizations keeping unit journals as was the case in subsequent conflicts. But when I read the rest of the sentence the enigma was solved, for the correspondent added, "but now I am about well of it." I knew then that he was suffering from a malady quite common among people living on unbalanced diets and in unsanitary surroundings. Georgia soldiers serving in Lee's army sometimes referred to it as "The Virginia Quickstep" and Yanks stationed in my native area often called it "The Tennessee Quickstep."

In scanning the letters of a Union soldier who served under General Frederick Lander I found the statement: "Landers has the

ganders." At first I read "ganders" as if it had a hard "g." On reflection, I realized that the "g" was soft. What General Lander actually had was jaundice. Lander was strongly disliked by this soldier who added, "I hope that the old so and so dies," except that he did not write "so and so"; you will probably have no difficulty imagining the words he actually used. The next letter in the pile, and the arrangement was chronological, began with the comment: "Well old Landers is dead. I'll bet the old so and so is down in hell pumping thunder at three cents a clap!"

On June 8, 1862 a Georgia soldier wrote his spouse: "My dear and loving wife, I this evening seat myself to answer your most kine and affectionated letter which I received this after knoon. . . . I am sorry to here you are sick and about to loose your teeth. You must take care of them and not loose them as they are a great peace of property to any one. You must take a brush and clean them three or four times a day. . . . I would hate to come home and fine you without any teeth."

The recipient of this letter wrote that she would like to visit her husband in camp. This proposal, which apparently caused considerable agitation, impelled the soldier to reply: "I would not have you in camps for nothing. if you were here I would [have to] kill someone in two hours. All meenness you can think of are in camps and . . . they are no use for you here . . . it is no place for a nice woman to be at. They are several women in camps at this time, go on like the men, sleep in the tents . . . sum one way and sum another. if you think you can stand such I have nothing more to say." Apparently she *was* a "nice woman," for she gave up the idea of visiting her husband.

The question arises, "For what did Civil War soldiers fight?" Many had only vague ideas concerning their motivation. Some went to war because their neighbors went and others donned the uniform to get away from the humdrum of farm, shop or factory.

As to the Yanks, some fought for freedom of the slaves. One of these was Chauncey H. Cooke of the 25th Wisconsin Regiment

who wrote before he heard of the Emancipation Proclamation: "I have no heart in this war if the slaves cannot be free." After the fall of Vicksburg he wrote: "I tell the boys right to their face I am in the war for the freedom of the slave. When they talk about saving the Union, I tell them that it is Dutch for me. I am for helping the slaves if the Union goes to smash. Most of the boys have their laugh at me for helping 'Niggers.' "

The overwhelming majority of Yanks were fighting to preserve the Union. In their correspondence they frequently refer to the Union as "the best government on earth." Devotion to Union found eloquent expression in some of their letters. Private Sam Croft, a young soldier from Pennsylvania, wrote after a hard march in September, 1861: "I have never once thought of giving out. . . . I am well, hardy, strong, and doing my country a little service. I did not come for money and good living. My heart beats high and I am proud of being a soldier. When I look along the line of glistening bayonets with the glorious Stars and Stripes floating over them . . . I am proud and sanguine of success." Croft died at Gettysburg.

Of Confederates, most who commented on their individual motivation indicated that they were fighting to protect their families and their homes against foreign invaders—wicked and heartless invaders, most Rebs regarded Yankees to be. A Georgian wrote to his wife in 1862 concerning the Federals: "Teach my children to hate them with that bitter hatred that will never permit them to meet without seeking to destroy each other."

Some were fighting for slavery. Not often do they reveal this. Usually they wrote of fighting for self-government, or for the Southern way of life. But there seems to be little reason to doubt that most Southerners, slaveholders and non-slaveholders, were deeply interested in maintaining slavery, not primarily as a system of labor, but rather as an instrument of social control. G. G. Holland, a North Carolina soldier, wrote to M. W. Simmons, September 28, 1863: "You know I am a poor man having none

of the property said to be the cause of the present war. But I have a wife & some children to raise in honor & never to be put on an equality with the African race."

Study of letters, diaries and other sources reveals several notable traits of the common soldiers. First was a delightful sense of humor. Rebs and Yanks were fond of joking and some of the best jokes were about the hardtack or crackers that were a principal item in field rations. A Kansas soldier reported overhearing this dialogue in camp:

Sergeant: "Boys, I was eating a piece of hardtack this morning and bit into something soft. What do you suppose it was?"

Private: "A worm?"

Sergeant: "No, by g—d, it was a ten penny nail."

Crackers or hardtack came in boxes or barrels marked "B.C." These letters probably stood for Brigade Commissary. But some consumers swore that they represented the date of manufacture of the contents. Crackers were so often infested with worms that soldiers nicknamed them "worm castles." One soldier wrote: "All the fresh meat we had came in the hardtack, and I preferring my meat cooked used to toast my biscuits before eating them."

Some soldiers liked to tease their wives. For example, William R. Stillwell, a Georgia Reb, wrote his wife after a long absence in Lee's army: "If I did not write and receive letters from you I believe that I would forgit that I was married. I don't feel much like a maryed man but I never forgit it so sofar as to court enny other lady but if I should you must forgive me as I am so forgitful."

Private William Sprinkle, a young Reb from North Carolina, wrote Thomas Pindexter, a married neighbor of about his own age: "Thomy I want you to be good and tri to take cear of the wemmen and childern tell I get home and we'll all have a chance . . . I want you to go . . . and see my wife and childern but I want you to take your wife with you when you go."

Another Reb observed that Yankees were "thicker than lise on a hen and a dam site ornraier."

A Yank wrote "[I am so hungry] I could eat a rider off his horse and snap at the stirrups." Another Yank, disgusted by the brevity of a recently received letter, wrote: "Yore leter was short and sweet, jist like a rosted maget." A third Yank wrote to his father after his first skirmish in Virginia: "Dear Pa . . . Went out a Skouting yesterday. We got to one house where there were five secessionist they broke & run and Arch holored out to shoot the ornery suns of biches and we all let go at them. They may say what they please, but godamit Pa it is fun."

A second notable trait, speaking of the majority of common soldiers, was pride—in themselves and in their families. The soldier's greatest fear when he faced battle was not that he would be killed or wounded—though concern for safety was deep and real—but that he might bring disgrace on himself and on his loved ones. On the day after the first battle of Bull Run, a Yank wrote proudly to his father: "We got the worst of it, but I didn't run." A Georgia soldier wrote his wife after his baptism of fire: "It was a pretty severe anniciation . . . but thank god I had nerve to stand it." Following the terrible battle of Franklin a Reb informed his brother: "One of old Abe's boys pluged me in the right foot making a severe wound [but] I am proud to say that there was no one between me and the Yankees when I was wounded."

When deprivation, sickness and war-weariness caused spirits to sag, pride in self and family kept many soldiers at their posts. Private John Cotton of Alabama wrote his wife, in May 1863: "I want to come home as bad as any body can . . . but I shan't run away. . . . I don't want it throwed up to my children after I am dead and gone that I was a deserter. . . . I don't want to do anything if I no it will leave a stain on my posterity."

A third trait was courage. I do not mean to suggest that all were heroes. In every major battle a considerable number of soldiers skulked, sneaked to the rear, or ran. A Confederate officer

saw a soldier streaking to the rear in a battle in North Georgia. The officer asked: "What are you running for?" Without slowing his pace the fugitive replied: "Kase I can't fly." But those who shirked in battle were the exception. Most stayed at their posts and gave a good account of themselves.

Civil War combat took an enormous amount of raw courage. Battles were fought at close range, rifle and artillery fire was terribly destructive, and charges were sometimes decided by hand-to-hand encounters in which antagonists clobbered each other with clubbed muskets, with stones or sticks, and even gouged and bit.

At Second Cold Harbor on June 3, 1864, men of Hancock's famous Second Corps, one of the best fighting organizations in the Union army, when told that they had to charge a seemingly impregnable position, calmly wrote out their names and addresses on slips of paper (identification tags were not items of government issue in the Civil War) and pinned these to the backs of their blouses so that their bodies might be readily identified and the folk at home promptly informed of their fate. In the attack that ensued, probably the bloodiest ten minutes of the war, hundreds of these brave men yielded up their lives on the altar of Union.

During the course of the war there were innumerable instances of individual valor. Rebel Private Mattix, wounded in the arm at Murfreesboro, went to his commander and said: "Colonel, my arm is hurt and I cannot use my rifle, but I can carry the flag. May I?" Private Mattix knew that the position of regimental color bearer was unquestionably the most dangerous assignment in combat; he also knew that three color bearers of his unit had already been shot down that day. But when the colonel nodded assent, Private Mattix seized the staff with his good arm and bore the colors triumphantly through the remainder of that bloody battle.

A Union soldier whose name I do not know, because his commander failed to give it in his official report, lay mortally wounded on the field at Hanover Court House, May 27, 1862. At the close of the fighting, when he saw his colonel walking near, he motioned

for the officer to come to him. The colonel thought that the soldier wanted to send a farewell message to some loved one at home, but what he heard as he stooped over the prostrate figure was the inquiry, "Colonel, is the day ours?" "Yes," responded the officer. "Then, I am willing to die," replied the soldier. He did die shortly afterward and he was buried on the field where he gave his life. This humble man had probably never heard of the battle of Quebec, the Heights of Abraham and the famous last words there of Montcalm and Wolfe. But his gallantry was as great as theirs, and his dying words no less glorious. His name deserves fully as much as theirs to be recorded on the pages of history.

A fourth trait was patriotism. Again, I am speaking of the majority. Many men on both sides avoided entering service by paying $300 commutation or hiring substitutes, and thousands deserted. One of the most impressive expressions of patriotic sentiment was that of Private John F. Brobst of the 25th Wisconsin who wrote to his sweetheart early in 1863: "Home is sweet and friends are dear, but what would they all be to let the country go to ruin and be a slave. I am contented with my lot . . . for I know that I am doing my duty, and I know that it is my duty to do as I am now a-doing. If I live to get back, I shall be proud of the freedom I shall have, and know that I helped to gain that freedom. If I should not get back, it will do them good who do get back."

A fifth trait was capacity for suffering. Men of both armies sometimes had to go for days without any food save a few grains of corn picked up from the places where the horses fed and parched over the campfires. Yanks on the Knoxville campaign of late 1863, and Rebs who made the long campaign to Tennessee with Hood in December, 1864, marched for miles over rocky, ice-coated roads in their bare feet, leaving traces of their blood along the paths that they trod. And they learned to endure such hardship with a minimum of murmur.

The heroism of the wounded was particularly outstanding. Young Day Elmore of Illinois enlisted when he was seventeen; he

was first a drummer boy but he joined in the shooting at Pea Ridge and was never again willing to be a musician. He became a full-fledged soldier and at Chickamauga he was wounded in the chest and sent to prison. He later was exchanged, after which he reenlisted as a "veteran volunteer" for three years or the war. At Franklin he received a serious wound and was picked up on the battlefield by a local Southern woman who took him to her house and nursed him for several days until he died. After his death, she wrote his parents: "His wound bled profusely . . . and he suffered a great deal but did not complain, he was perfectly conscious to the last."

The endurance of another soldier, a Confederate, is told by a remarkable manuscript preserved in the Confederate Museum in Richmond.

Spottsylvania County, Va.
May 10, 1864

Dear Father:

This is my last letter to you. I went into battle this evening as Courier for General Heth. I have been struck by a piece of Shell and my right shoulder is horribly mangled & I know death is inevitable. I am very weak but I write to you because I know you would be delighted to read a word from your dying Son. I know death is near. My friend Fairfax will write you at my request and give you the particulars of my death. My grave will be marked so that you may visit it if you desire to do so, but [it] is optionary with you whether you let my remains rest here or in Miss. I pray my God to forgive my sins & I feel that his promises are true that he will forgive me and save me. Give my love to all my friends. My strength fails me. My horse & equipment will be left for you. Again, a long farewell to you. May we meet in heaven.

Your dying son,
J. R. Montgomery

Fairfax kept his promise, and his letter, dated May 15, 1864 is filed with that of Montgomery. He informed the bereaved father

that the wounded son had been taken to a field hospital but that surgeons had decided that an operation would be futile. He added that Montgomery lingered until the morning of the 14th of May 1864 when he died peacefully. "On the evening he was wounded," Fairfax stated, "his strength was sufficient to write you a letter which I enclose . . . I have never witnessed such an exhibition of fortitude and Christian resignation as he showed. . . . No word of complaint escaped his lips. . . . He retained his consciousness to the last."

What does all this add up to? It proves the essential soundness of the masses. In their Civil War conduct the lowly people of America, white and black, demonstrated that they were as richly endowed with the qualities that count in good citizenship as are the members of any other class in society. They also provided a convincing testimonial to the soundness of democratic government. They gave a resounding affirmation to Lincoln's question at Gettysburg, "Can a nation conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal long endure?" In this their time of testing the common folk justified the faith that had been reposed in them by the founding fathers. They proved that a self-governing people could quarrel and fight and come together again and build on the ruins of war a great and an enduring nation.

CAPTAIN CONRAD'S SPY NET

JOHN BAKELESS

April 5, 1968

John Bakeless

Dr. Bakeless, an alumnus of Williams and Harvard, has had a varied and distinguished career as teacher, editor, author and soldier. Among his books are THE ECONOMIC CAUSES OF MODERN WAR, *1921, his two well-known works on Christopher Marlowe, 1937 and 1942, a life of Daniel Boone, 1939, recently revised, his* LEWIS AND CLARK, PARTNERS IN DISCOVERY, *1947,* GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, *1957, and* TRAITORS, TURNCOATS AND HEROES, *1960. He is a veteran of both world wars, and in the last, as Assistant Chief, and Chief, of the Southern European Branch, G-2, he shared many of the perils and excitements of the subject of his Spahr Lecture, Captain Conrad. Readers will find Conrad's remarkable career described against its full background in Colonel Bakeless' forthcoming book,* THE CONFEDERATE SPIES.

CAPTAIN CONRAD'S SPY NET

IT IS ONE of the queer facts of American history that our army has almost never entered a war with an adequate military intelligence service; and this has, of course, led to a waste of the lives of numberless American soldiers, needlessly slaughtered because our country never will prepare, in time of peace, to exert the immense power it actually possesses. The Spanish-American War probably offers the most striking example of this characteristic American stupidity—not least in the lack of military intelligence. Colonel Andrew S. Rowan undoubtedly earned the medal that they gave him for carrying the message to Garcia. But imagine a War Department that—after war has been imminent for months—doesn't know where to find its chief ally in the territory of the future enemy!

We had partly learned our lesson by the time World War II began to threaten. It was a long, hard job to have G-2 and ONI ready before Pearl Harbor, but they *were* ready. And the intelligence services that could crack the machine cryptography of the Japanese Purple Code were really pretty good.

There are two exceptions to the lamentable tale of neglected intelligence in all our other wars. Long before the fight at Lexing-

ton, Paul Revere and a group of friends had set up an unofficial organization to keep an eye on General Gage's redcoats. It was an alert and excellent intelligence service and it supplied the patriots with much valuable information—only none of the amateur spies realized that one of the supposedly patriot leaders to whom they reported regularly, Dr. Benjamin Church, was a leading British secret agent!

Even Revere's intelligence service, however, was able to operate only in New England. No one had thought to extend it to the other colonies. When, a year later, in 1776, General Washington suddenly found himself penned up on Manhattan, he had absolutely no way of getting any information of the enemy at all. Before the British arrived, it would have been easy to set up an intelligence network on Staten Island and Long Island, in Jersey, and along the coast, to wait secretly till the enemy landed and then begin reporting. No one thought of that, either!

But General Washington had a good deal on his mind in those days, and it wasn't done. Eventually, in sheer desperation, he had to sacrifice Nathan Hale's life uselessly, sending him out on what was certainly the worst prepared intelligence mission in the history of warfare. The general sent the poor fellow out with no experience, no training, no cover story, no code or cipher, and no line of communication—to an area the main body of the enemy had already left before the spy arrived! Of course, by the time he sent out Nathan Hale, there was nothing else for General Washington to do but the mission was a failure. It produced no information of the enemy whatever.

The other exception to the usual American rule of total unpreparedness for securing military intelligence was the Civil War —but not on the Union side, you may be sure! It was the Confederates who began the war with an intelligence organization that worked perfectly, secured an abundance of accurate information, and might have lasted out the war if its members had been a little less incurably dramatic.

Months before the Civil War began, Captain Thomas Jordan, of the Regular Army, and the widow of a State Department official, Mrs. Rose Greenhow, who literally "knew everybody," had set up in Washington an elaborate espionage system, with tentacles reaching into the Navy and War Departments, the Senate Military Affairs Committee, and the White House itself. So perfectly were these Confederate spies organized that Mrs. Greenhow was able to supply the Confederates with McDowell's march order, his strength, his plans, and the route he would take to Bull Run. Having spent months in establishing this remarkable organization, Captain Jordan resigned from the U. S. Army and calmly went South to Beauregard's headquarters, where he could personally receive the reports of the spy network he had himself set up! Is it any wonder Beauregard later remarked that he was as well informed about the Union Army as any of its own generals?

One thing that helped Mrs. Greenhow was that the chairman of the Senate Military Committee—a good man for any Confederate spy to know—was hopelessly in love with her. Letters signed with the initial of his Christian name and in his handwriting (later seized by the Pinkertons) read like the bleatings of a lovesick schoolboy. Senator Henry Wilson was, naturally, a good man for a Confederate spy to have as an admirer.

The Federals were able to break up the Greenhow ring in the first year of the war. But by that time it had done its work, and the warwise rebels had long since taken suitable precautions against just such an event. They had a new service all ready to replace the Greenhow spies.

The new leader of Confederate intelligence in Washington was one of the most remarkable secret agents in history. He was Captain Thomas N. Conrad, chaplain of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry —who actually did service as a chaplain when not engaged in espionage. He served throughout the war as a secret agent and head of a ring of spies and secret couriers, with a Washington headquarters in the old Van Ness mansion, near the White House,

about where the Pan American Union stands now, and with a second, hidden headquarters some distance down the Potomac.

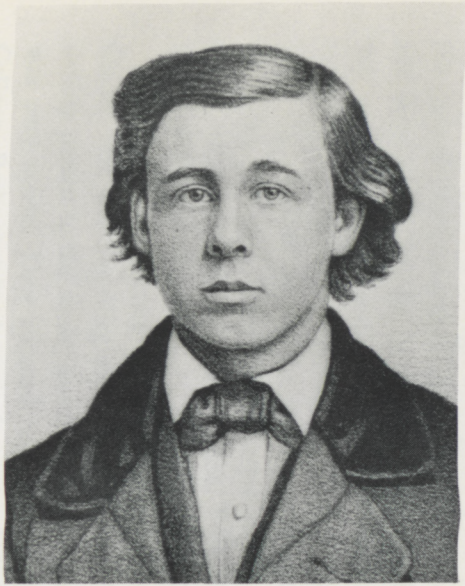
Captain Conrad, though a Virginian, was a Dickinson man of the class of 1857, who took an M. A., probably *in absentia,* in 1860 and received the M. Sc. in 1890. By the standards of the day, he was a man of considerable learning. By General J. E. B. Stuart's standards, which were exacting, he was a good soldier. By any standards, he was one of the ablest secret agents that ever lived. (I speak out of a considerable acquaintance with colleagues in the American, British, German, Italian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, and Macedonian services.)

Conrad's room-mate at Dickinson was Daniel Mountjoy Cloud, '58, another Virginian, who joined Ashby's cavalry and swiftly passed to the secret service in which Turner Ashby himself was very active. They roomed together for one year in 24 East College. Both were serious and extremely religious young men. Cloud was actually studying in the Biblical Institute at Concord, New Hampshire, in 1861; Conrad describes himself as a Methodist "lay reader." Both belonged to Phi Kappa Sigma and the Belles Lettres Society. The list of books which Conrad borrowed while a college student clearly shows his strong religious interest—though it does not foreshadow his daredevil exploits in espionage. Both became teachers, Conrad going on to college teaching and college presidencies, Cloud to the superintendency of schools in Memphis, Tenn. Cloud seems to have done rather more legitimate reconnaissance—as a scout in uniform, not as a spy—than Conrad. Unhappily, he did not write up his adventures. The most amusing, probably, was his exploit of thrusting his sabre, not through a Yankee cavalryman but through the man's hat, which Cloud bore back to the Confederate lines in triumph. The Confederate army was always short of headgear, and Cloud had a friend who needed a new hat. A sabre thrust through the crown did not, in Confederate eyes, seriously impair its value.

Conrad's combination of devout Christianity with diabolical



DANIEL MOUNTJOY CLOUD
Class of 1858



THOMAS NELSON CONRAD
Class of 1857

From graduation lithographs, Spahr Library

skill and immense courage in the field was not unusual in the Confederate Army. Every one knows of Stonewall Jackson's religious enthusiasm and Lee's quietly devout nature. One pious artillery commander is said to have uttered a prayer, "Lord, have mercy on their souls," every time his guns let go at the luckless Yankees. The scout and spy, Frank Stringfellow,—later the Reverend Frank Stringfellow,—always tried to injure Union soldiers as little as possible. When it was his life or theirs,—as it frequently was,—he always contented himself with "knocking them cold," if he could, instead of killing them. On one occasion, captured as a spy and on his way to a court martial that meant certain execution, Stringfellow had a chance to seize an axe, kill the sergeant guarding him, and escape. But he had had some conversation with the sergeant and thought his soul in such a state that the man was unfit to die. (Any one who has conversed with sergeants will understand that!) He spared the man's life—and managed to escape anyhow, without hurting anybody. (It is too bad there is no way of finding out what became of the sergeant's soul.) When I wrote this tale to Mr. Stringfellow Barr, he replied, "That was just like grandfather!"

Though he was a man of sensitive conscience, Chaplain Conrad was not a fully ordained clergyman. He called himself a Methodist "lay reader." Modern Methodists would probably describe him as a "local preacher." The 3rd Virginia Cavalry, which was not fussy about ecclesiastical details, accepted him as a fellow soldier and listened to many a godly discourse from him, when the reverend secret agent was not spying in Washington, looting secret papers from the U. S. War Department, scouting along the front in uniform, or lending the boys a hand with his sabre. Conrad himself mentions sermons on "The Christian Soldier," "The Power of Prayer," "Paul, A Great Hero," "David, A Mighty Warrior," and "God in History."

When the Southern states began to secede, Conrad was headmaster of a school in Georgetown, in which the sentiment was

overwhelmingly Southern. The headmaster, students, masters, and parents were all "Secesh," so far as any one can now learn. How a school practically in Washington could have failed to include a few Northern boys, sons of Congressmen or Government officials, it is hard to understand; but if there were any, no one has ever identified them.

If the school had retained a respectable reticence regarding its Confederate leanings, there would have been no trouble,—or, at least, there would not have been trouble quite so soon. But it was not long before the usual wartime rumors were afloat. Mysterious signals were being made from the school to mysterious beings across the river. Just what military information a group of schoolboys may have had, it is hard to understand. All this talk was probably merely part of the romantic nonsense that always floats about at the beginning of a war. It is by no means so easy as amateurs imagine to set up a signal system, especially a secret system involving codes and ciphers. If Conrad's pupils had really had any information of interest to the Confederacy, it would have been vastly easier to take it across the Potomac in a rowboat.

Conrad was first arrested after his school's Commencement turned into a frenzied demonstration in favor of the Confederacy. I am not quite sure when this took place. Conrad himself says it was in July, 1861. But the Washington papers, which are silent about this episode, report his arrest in 1862. Quite possibly he was arrested both years—the Yankees were always after him!

There was every reason to arrest him, too, for this learned and devout Dickinson alumnus went right on earning death sentences steadily until 1865. None of this did him any harm, for the Yankees could never keep him long enough for a court-martial.

One can hardly blame Lincoln's government for being disturbed about the Commencement exercises at which Captain Conrad's troubles all began. It had long been thought that the Principal was "too pronounced" in his secessionist views. He had also been strongly suspected of sending recruits to the Confederate

Army. Now, at Commencement, his boys delivered orations that "smacked of the strongest Southern sentiments."

That was bad enough. But when, at the close of the Commencement program, the band struck up "Dixie," the sedateness appropriate to academic solemnities vanished. "Cheer after cheer sounded through the hall." Ladies—real Southern ladies—"stood upon chairs, frantically waving their handkerchiefs." The rebel yell was not, as yet, customary save in fox-hunting, but there was a good deal of noise.

That evening, a squad of Yankees gathered in Principal Conrad at his own school building, put him in irons, and marched that learned man to the Old Capital Prison. Colonel William E. Doster, then commanding the prison, says Conrad was charged with communicating with the enemy and sending recruits to the Confederate Army. Probably the "Secesh" demonstration at Commencement was merely the last straw.

The Federal authorities, not yet in a mood for their later severities, paroled the schoolmaster and let him wander about Washington for a month and a half, requiring him only to report to the authorities weekly. It cannot be said, however, that his conduct during this period was such as the Federals could approve. He used the time to engage in a plot to kill Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, commanding general of the U. S. Army. This ended when the Richmond authorities sent strict orders not to undertake anything of the sort. Shortly after this, the Federal authorities sent him to Richmond as an exchanged prisoner.

Major the Reverend Dabney Ball, chaplain of the Cavalry Corps, took him to "Jeb" Stuart. Apparently this was in the summer of 1861—possibly even before the Commencement demonstration that made all the trouble. Perhaps Conrad began his religious duties at once, though he was not formally assigned to the 3rd Cavalry for some time. There is no doubt he was speedily put to work finding out what the Federals were doing.

While Mrs. Greenhow and her friends were still successfully

spying, there was no special reason for sending Captain Conrad into Washington; but he did "now and then" enter Federal headquarters in the garb of a Union chaplain (which, at that period, was not necessarily a blue uniform). His purpose was "to pick up any possible information about contemplated movements or advances."

This was after Bull Run, when the Federals were still trying to catch their breath and had no intention whatever of advancing. However, by the time McClellan was ready to begin his 1862 Peninsular Campaign, Conrad was making himself very much at home in Washington. He could send reports to Richmond easily through "the Doctors' line," which consisted of three co-operative physicians. The first picked up Confederate secret dispatches somewhere near the Washington Navy Yard and carried them to the home of a "patient" at the extreme southern limit of his practice. There another physician picked them up to carry to a still more southern "patient." The third physician carried the secret papers far enough south for the official secret Confederate couriers to get them. This line operated throughout the war, though Conrad had other lines. One of them took South the magnificent uniform and sword presented to Robert E. Lee, which he later wore at Appomattox.

Conrad returned secretly to Washington after the Mason-Slidell affair had nearly led Great Britain to come into the war on the Confederate side. Some time after the Confederate commissioners reached Europe they negotiated—or so Conrad believed—a loan to the Confederacy of $3,000,000, from a source he does not name. Since the British and French commissioners negotiating terms could not get through the blockade, they came to Washington, where Conrad met them and brought them secretly through the lines. Conrad's identfication to the commissioners was rather amusing. The Confederate War Department officially certified that their secret messenger would have "a gash in his tongue and a scar upon the index finger of his left hand." It is interesting

to note that on this journey to Washington, Conrad put up at the Maryland tavern of John Harrison Surratt, whose wife was hanged a few years later for alleged complicity in the assassination of President Lincoln.

Conrad's extraordinary tale seems to be true, though no confirmation can be found in official documents. It was, after all, a highly secret affair, it is doubtful if the loan negotiations succeeded, and officials on all sides may have decided that it was better to have no record at all in the archives. Or papers relating to this affair may all have been in the Confederate espionage records, all of which are known to have been destroyed. Conrad believed that the Confederacy actually did receive $3,000,000. But information on such a matter would not necessarily be given to a secret agent, whose duty was done when he got the French and British commissioners through the Union lines and started on their way to Richmond.

When McClellan was planning the Peninsular Campaign in 1862, Conrad managed to enter the War Department in Washington personally, go to the desk of his undercover agent there, and remove from the man's desk exact figures showing McClellan's forces—which the Confederate spy in the War Department had left on the desk for him. At the same time Allan Pinkerton was supplying McClellan with figures that incredibly exaggerated the Confederate strength—incredibly, that is, except that McClellan believed them!

Conrad nearly brought about the capture of Washington by J. E. B. Stuart on two occasions—either of which might have led to the seizure of President Lincoln and a Confederate victory. The 'ifs" of history are of course dangerous. Both of Conrad's endeavors failed, but both were—or would have been—sure-fire successes but for a total failure in the Confederate communication system. During the battle of Second Manassas, Washington had been practically stripped of troops to resist the victorious Confederates. It was a golden opportunity for Stuart to gallop his cavalry

down Pennsylvania Avenue and seize the capital city. Holding the capital might have been impossible. But unchecked Confederates let loose in Washington for a day or two would have wrought damage that would have terribly crippled the Federal Government —especially if they had captured the President and a few of the more important Cabinet members. The thing could have been done easily enough—if Conrad had been able to get a message through to Stuart. But all his efforts failed and Lee's valiant army was at length beaten back.

When, at length, Conrad had a chance to talk to Stuart, that worthy lamented losing the great chance of his life and adjured his secret agent to watch for another such opportunity.

Within about a year, the great chance came again, just before Gettysburg. Stuart had advanced far into Maryland, when Conrad again found that the terrified Federals had stripped the capital's defenses. This time, he knew about where Stuart must be. Mounting a horse and posing as a native of the area—with which he was perfectly familiar—he rode boldly past two Federal troopers until he reached Rockville, Maryland. Here Stuart and the Cavalry Corps had paused to rest, only an hour or two before. Here they had been delighted to find a school filled with young, attractive—and ardently Confederate—girls. In the midst of war's alarms, the girls were a great pleasure; and every one—both girls and soldiers —was having a thoroughly good time, when a large Federal wagon train, mule-drawn, loaded with supplies, appeared outside the town.

Abandoning "the endearing elegance of female friendship" briefly, a Confederate detachment galloped out and captured the train. Many of the wagons were damaged and these Stuart burned. But he kept 125 of the best wagons and, with this train, moved his horsemen on toward Pennsylvania. When Conrad, a second time unfortunate, reached Rockville, he had missed Stuart by so narrow a margin that the damaged wagons Stuart had had to destroy were still burning. But there was no hope of overtaking

Stuart in time. Once again, faulty communications had denied "Jeb" a chance to capture Washington.

While Conrad was failing, by incredibly hard luck, to get his vital intelligence to Stuart, another Confederate spy, with equally vital intelligence, was toiling through the Union Army in civilian disguise, toward Longstreet's Corps of Lee's Army. This was "Harrison," Longstreet's own secret agent, who had been sent to him by Secretary of War Seddon. Longstreet had sent the man into Washington just before the Gettysburg campaign started and he was now on his way back with news.

Conrad had failed to give Stuart the news that might have made that campaign a victory. Harrison at least gave Lee the news that kept the campaign from being a total Confederate disaster. Lee had already spread out his army, if not "from hell to breakfast," at least from Chambersburg to York, Cashtown, Carlisle, and nearly to Harrisburg, not to mention John B. Gordon's division at Wrightsville. This dispersion of forces was sensible enough for the advance on the Susquehanna that Lee expected to make, with an outwitted Federal Army far behind him. The Confederate Army went into bivouac that night while the staff wrote out orders for a continuation of the movement, quite unaware that the Union Army was closing in behind them. This was the news Harrison brought to Longstreet, who hurried him on to Lee. All orders were instantly revised. As a result, the Confederate army concentrated in time, and met the Yanks at Gettysburg. Conrad had just missed giving the Confederacy a victory—which would have been a certainty if Stuart had seized Washington. Harrison could not give Lee a victory at Gettysburg, but he did prevent the overwhelming defeat that would have resulted if scattered Confederate forces had been attacked by concentrated Yankees.

Harrison's identity has always been a mystery. Even Dr. Freeman could only wonder who he was and what became of him. In fact, as certain recent discoveries of my own have shown, he

was James Harrison, a well known Shakespearean actor, one of Edwin Booth's supporting players. He had a long and successful theatrical career both before and after the war, though in the end, as actors do, he fell on evil days. He had, however, been so competent an actor that Booth once changed the reading of a Shakesperian passage at his suggestion. When he died in Louisville in 1911, the old spy died game, true to the traditions of his trade. His obituary has not a word of what he was doing in the Civil War.

It is curious to think that, closely as their ways ran together on that memorable June 28, neither Conrad nor Harrison probably ever knew the other existed.

Conrad seems to have been arrested several times—the records are not wholly clear. But none of the arrests ever did the Federals much good. Perhaps his cleverest escape was due to his pose as a smallpox patient. He had had just time to make certain changes in his appearance—enough like smallpox for nervous soldiers who didn't want to approach him closely. The Yankees put him in an isolation camp for prisoners suffering from the disease—but even the guards kept their distance. Under the circumstances Conrad—who was perfectly healthy—had no difficulty in escaping. Even his pursuers were not very anxious to catch up!

Toward the end of the war "Norton," as Conrad calls his Confederate undercover man in the U.S. Secret Service, suddenly warned him that the Federals would arrest him that night and search the old Van Ness house, where he made his headquarters. Who Norton was, I do not know, as Conrad was careful to shield his identity. I have never been able to trace "Norton," but I cannot say I feel very bad about it. Neither could the Federals—and they had a much better chance than I have ever had!

Knowing that Lafayette Baker's men were on his trail, Conrad hastily left Washington, having first urged Norton to "betray" him to the Federals at once. If Norton himself reported Conrad's espionage to the Federals, his own "cover" as an apparently loyal

Federal counter-espionage man would be made all the safer. Conrad himself borrowed $150 from a Confederate lady living in Washington, posed as a ship's cook on a Potomac river schooner, and was back with his own army, reporting to J. E. B. Stuart next morning. Norton had warned him just in time. Within an hour of his departure, Baker's men were raiding the Van Ness house.

Just after Lincoln's assassination, Conrad was again arrested, but that was a serio-comic affair. He had always relied on occasional changes in the style of his hair and beard to help conceal his identity. He had at one time worn his beard with the elaborate side whiskers that are still called "sideburns," because General Burnside affected them; and I have always strongly suspected that he was wearing his facial hair in the bristling Burnside manner when he visited the general's camp and secured important strategic information. It was Conrad who had warned the Confederates that Burnside would march to Fredericksburg, so that Lee was snugly entrenched and ready for the Federals when they attacked.

By 1865 Conrad had changed his hair-do again, and it was this which led to his arrest. By extraordinary ill luck, just about the time John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln, the Confederate exactly adopted Booth's style of hair and moustaches. It was purely coincidence, but it led to Conrad's immediate arrest—apparently on charge of being John Wilkes Booth. He had no trouble proving that he was not the assassin, but it is just as well the Federals never knew that the fugitive Booth reached the farm where he was killed on Conrad's horse, "Old White." This was another coincidence about which Conrad at the time knew nothing. One of his men, riding "Old White," met Booth and gave him a lift. Conrad himself told the story in after years.

He was arrested again at the war's end but escaped, hid in the Luray Caverns and elsewhere till the excitement was over, and in due course returned to civilian life. He married—believe it or not! —a girl namd Minnie Ball, which greatly amused every one who

remembered the Minié ball the Federals had fired at the Confederates for so long.

In civil life Conrad returned to education, became a college President, and even worked for a time in that capital city where he had moved so long in peril of his life.

THE LOYAL OPPOSITION *in* CIVIL WAR PHILADELPHIA

NICHOLAS B. WAINWRIGHT

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Nicholas B. Wainwright

Dr. Wainwright, an honorary alumnus of Dickinson College, is presently Director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and has long been associated with the development of the Society as a major resource and influence in Pennsylvania history. He is the author of three major works in Philadelphia business history and the popular PHILADELPHIA IN THE ROMANTIC AGE OF LITHOGRAPHY, *1958. His* GEORGE CROGHAN, WILDERNESS DIPLOMAT, *1959, is an important contribution to Colonial history, touching on Carlisle affairs, and his* THE IRVINE STORY, *1964, a chronicle even more closely related to Dickinson history. His edition of the memorable Fisher diaries, written by an alumnus of 1827, was published serially in* THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY, *and finally in book form, 1967, under the title,* A PHILADELPHIA PERSPECTIVE; THE DIARY OF SIDNEY GEORGE FISHER, COVERING THE YEARS, 1834–1871. *His lecture was also published in the* PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE, 1964.

THE LOYAL OPPOSITION *in* CIVIL WAR PHILADELPHIA

BEHIND the military fronts of the great "War Between the States" were the political fronts. Rival sets of politicians were as active in skirmishes and campaigns as were the embattled soldiers, and they struggled over issues that were as basic to the course of the war as any victory in the field. While the men in blue fought the men in gray, the two political parties of the North contended for the places of power which controlled wartime policy and the destiny of a nation.

Irreconcilable political differences between Republicans and Democrats led to the oversimplification of issues. Democrats were classified as Copperheads and secessionists, as the peace party. They retorted with the worst insult at their command; they substituted the term "abolitionist" for Republican. In oratory, in pamphlets, and in the press, politicians hurled abuse and ridicule at one another.

Both parties were essentially loyal to the concept of the Union, but differed in their interpretation of the Constitution. They were divided on Southern rights, which the Democrats wanted to protect, but which the Republicans were charged with planning to impair by abolishing property rights in slaves. Thus, the issues of

slavery, states' rights, and the Constitution were closely connected. Clustering around the constitutional issue were conflicts in interpretation of the legality of measures adopted for the prosecution of the war. This led to a curious situation. Most Democratic politicians wanted to support the war, but they could not bring themselves to a whole-hearted acceptance of the means by which it was waged—its financing, its suppression of treason, its conscription of men for the army.

The unanimity which both parties showed at the outset soon faded. Democrats mistrusted the administration, were alarmed at its assumption of extraordinary powers because of military necessity, were apprehensive that Lincoln would become an abolitionist. In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, they were aware of a growing sentiment that slavery had caused the war, that the war was being waged over slavery. With dismay, they sensed a rising popular belief that slavery must be destroyed, that it always had been and always would be a source of strife, that emancipation was the nearest way to victory.

Such a theory appalled Philadelphia Democrats, who had long been disgusted by abolitionist arguments. Hardly a Democrat in Philadelphia looked on slavery as anything but a curse, yet few were willing to attack it. The war, maintained most Democrats, was being fought to restore the Union and had nothing to do with slavery. Should slavery be abolished, the Union never could be restored because the South would never submit to the confiscation of its property. Abolitionists were actually disunionists, secessionists if you will; everything they did served to prevent a reunion.

Rapt attention was paid to such arguments by the rank and file of the city's Democratic following, the large Irish laboring class. These workmen hated abolitionists because they had been told that the freeing of the slaves would mean their migration to Philadelphia and consequent competition for jobs.[1]

[1] Diary of Sidney George Fisher, Oct. 6, 1862, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

Normally, political leaders of the working class are liberals. Such was not the case in Philadelphia during the Civil War. Its Democratic leaders were conservatives, a fact they were proud to claim while arguing that the Republicans were revolutionists.[2] Directing the Democratic party were many members of the city's best-known families, men of note in the community, such as Colonel Charles J. Biddle, George W. Biddle, Charles and Edward Ingersoll, former mayor Peter McCall, William B. Reed, Benjamin and Richard Rush, former mayor Richard Vaux, and George M. Wharton.[3] The energies of these talented and forceful individuals were bent on quelling the radicals who were calling for emancipation. Emancipation struck at property rights guaranteed by the Constitution; emancipation by the federal government would violate state sovereignty.

On March 6, 1862, Congressman Charles J. Biddle warned that the slavery question was not as profound as the Negro question, "vast, complex and embarrassing even if slavery were blotted out of existence." Opposed to the confiscation of slaves, this former commander of Pennsylvania's Bucktail Regiment went on to say: "I desire to see a speedy and glorious termination to this war. . . . I am a northern man with northern principles. In this conflict my pride and interests are all enlisted on the northern side, which is my side. It is in the interest of the North that I have ever been opposed alike to northern disunionists and southern disunionists. I would leave to my children the Union that our fathers left to us." His solution to the slavery problem was as follows: "When I see how deeply the Providence of God has rooted the institution of slavery in this land, I see that it can be safely eradicated only by a gradual process, in which neither the civil nor the military power of the Federal government can intervene with profit. General emancipation can be safely reached only through

[2] Speech of Charles Ingersoll before the Democratic Club of the Twenty-first Ward, *The Age*, June 12, 1863.

[3] Except for Richard Rush, all these men were lawyers.

state action, prompted by conviction and the progress of natural causes." For speeches like this, Colonel Biddle was called a Copperhead.[4]

In Philadelphia, Charles Ingersoll issued a local warning against fanaticism, by which he meant abolitionism. "Is there the man who does not see that the course which has been pursued on the point where the whole South, slaveholding or not, are most sensitive, and on which they are unanimous, is not only disturbing and insulting, but is meant to be. . . . Under such influences, the position of the country is a perfect dilemma; we must have victory, for if the South conquers us the Union never will be restored; yet each military success being an addition to the strength of the Abolitionists, the cry of emancipation, which is disunion, is the louder for it."

It was not the South that stood in the way of Union, Ingersoll reasoned, but the North, which was ruled by uncompromising, unreasoning abolitionists. The Southern states had seceded when a sectional party gained office. Get rid of the Republicans: in place of their slogan "Unconditional Submission" proclaim "Conciliation and Compromise!" This would bring the South back into the Union. "Fellow citizens," said Ingersoll, "the main difficulty is with the North, not the South, with the party who plotted to dissolve the Union long before South Carolina did." Sentiments such as this fastened on the Democratic Party the label of Southern sympathizers.[5]

There were even extremists who believed that Pennsylvania's destiny lay with the Confederacy.[6] While this lunatic fringe had no

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[4] *Speech of Hon. Charles J. Biddle of Pennsylvania. Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, March 6, 1862* (Washington, 1862), 8; *Speech of Hon. Charles J. Biddle of Pennsylvania. Delivered in the House of Representatives, June 2, 1862* (Washington, 1862), 8.

[5] Charles Ingersoll, *A Letter to a Friend in a Slave State by a Citizen of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1862), 30, 51; speech of Charles Ingersoll before the Fifteenth Ward Democratic Association, *The Age*, Apr. 23, 1863.

[6] *Why Pennsylvania Should Become One of the Confederate States of America.*

standing in the party, many Democrats flirted with peace proposals which they were anxious to submit to a so far victorious enemy. Then, too, there were defeatists like Buchanan's minister to China, William B. Reed, who had earlier suggested that Pennsylvania go with the South. In 1862, Reed published a pamphlet which advocated giving up the Union and arranging terms of recognition and separation. This is how he expressed himself: "I think there has been a struggle with at most a questionable success; and if the choice be between the continuance of the war, with its attendant suffering and demoralization, certain miseries and uncertain results, and a recognition of the Southern Confederacy, I am in favor of recognition. . . ."[7] From other sources arose warnings against abolition by military might. A Quaker wrote: "Be careful then and do not use *wicked* means even to free the slave!"[8]

Early in the war, the Democratic Party had a powerful grip on Philadelphia. Its membership was large, its leaders impassioned. It controlled City Councils, but Mayor Alexander Henry was in the other camp. A similar situation existed in Harrisburg where the Democrats enjoyed a majority in the lower house, but where the governor was a Republican.

Military defeats, threats of foreign intervention, and financial troubles made possible Democratic victories in 1862, when the party was successful in the state but lost some ground in Philadelphia. The basic political issue was white supremacy, the Democratic state convention having adopted such policies as: "Resolved, That the party fanaticism or crime, whichever it may be called, that seeks to turn the slaves of Southern States loose to overrun the

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By a Native of Pennsylvania (London, 1862); George M'Henry, *The Position and Duty of Pennsylvania* (London, 1863).

[7] William B. Reed, *A Paper Containing a Statement and Vindication of Certain Political Opinions* (Philadelphia, 1862), 7, 20–21. Reed suppressed this pamphlet shortly after it was printed.

[8] Alfred H. Love, *An Appeal in Vindication of Peace Principles and Against Resistance by Force of Arms* (Philadelphia, 1862), 12.

North and enter into competition with the white laboring masses, thus degrading and insulting their manhood by placing them on an equality with Negroes in their occupation is insulting to our race and merits our most emphatic and unqualified condemnation"; and "Resolved, That this is a government of white men, and was established exclusively for the white race; that the Negro race are not entitled to and ought not to be admitted to political or social equality with the white race." The convention put the blame for the war on Northern reformers: "Abolitionism is the parent of secessionism."[9]

In the autumn of 1862, the Democratic tide was running at the full. Horatio Seymour, who had announced that "this war cannot be brought to a successful conclusion or our country restored to an honorable peace under the Republican leaders," was elected governor of New York. Impressive Democratic victories were also scored in other states.[10]

These triumphs were interpreted by Democratic leaders as proof that the country was tired of war. Flushed with success, they were stung to even greater political efforts by Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation, effective January 1, 1863, and by his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in military cases. The popularity of the administration had reached a new low in November, 1862, with the removal of General George B. McClellan from his military command.

The time had come to organize Philadelphia Democracy for an all-out political campaign. In 1863, there was to be a guberna-

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[9] *Address of the Democratic State Central Committee, Together with the Proceedings of the Democratic State Convention Held at Harrisburg, July 4, 1862, and the Proceedings of the Democratic State Central Committee held at Philadelphia, July 29, 1862* (Philadelphia, 1862), 4, 7.

[10] *Speech of Hon. Horatio Seymour Before the Democratic Union State Convention at Albany, September 10th, 1862, on Receiving the Nomination for Governor* (New York, 1862), 8.

torial election. Should the Pennsylvania governorship be wrested from the Republicans, the re-election of Lincoln would be virtually doomed. Such, at least, was the opinion of the day.

The anniversary of Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans was celebrated on January 8, 1863, by the opening of Democratic headquarters, the Central Democratic Club, at 524 Walnut Street. Charles Ingersoll was elected president, and among those named vice-presidents were George W. Biddle, John C. Bullitt, and George M. Wharton. The purpose of the club was to defend "the pure principles of Democracy," which embraced such propositions as: "in the State of Pennsylvania all power is inherent in the *White People*"; and "the Government of the United States has no powers that are not delegated to it by the Constitution; and the powers delegated are such only as are *expressly* given to it."[11]

In his address at the opening of the club, Charles Ingersoll stated what was evidently the Democratic panacea for the situation which "finds us the Disunited States, our arms dishonored, our prosperity departed, and our treasury empty." All that was needed was for the Democratic Party to take possession of the government, and, when it did, its leader could then say to the South, "gentlemen, name your terms." According to this formula, the South would then return to the Union because the North was really proslavery. Had it not in its recent elections pronounced for the protection of slavery? Did this not mean that it sanctioned "the protection of the gentlemen of the South in their human property?" Advocating a convention of the people of Pennsylvania and elsewhere that would unite on a peace plan with the South for the restoration of the Union, Ingersoll observed: "I look on negro

[11] *Constitution and By-Laws of the Central Democratic Club, Organized January 1863* (Philadelphia, 1863). It is no coincidence that the Union League of Philadelphia was also organized in January, 1863, and in March the National Union Club came into being. These two organizations counteracted the Central Democratic Club. See *Articles of Association and Constitution of the National Union Club of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1863).

property as being sacred as any other property, and I sympathize with the South in their desire to preserve it."[12]

It is strange that the Northern Democrats believed the South would return to the Union should slavery be protected. The editor of the *Richmond Examiner* accused them of showing "the frivolity of children." He disposed of the idea: "Honorable peace is always to be desired. . . . But political union and social amity with the slayers of thousands of our countrymen would be an indecency."[13]

Not long after the establishment of the Central Democratic Club, its members had a new outrage to denounce. On January 28, 1863, Albert D. Boileau, publisher and editor of the city's only Democratic daily, the *Evening Journal,* was arrested and sent to Fort McHenry. A flagrant infringement on the freedom of the press had at last occurred in Philadelphia! A provost marshal had taken the law into his own hands when the *Journal* published an editorial commenting in terms of high praise on Jefferson Davis' last message, and had contrasted Davis' character, talents, and policy with Lincoln's, much to Lincoln's disparagement.

Just as they were warming to the task of castigating the government, the Democratic leaders were affronted by Boileau's reappearance in their midst. With such an excellent opportunity to play the role of martyr, Boileau had begged off. He had written a letter of apology stating that the editorial, supposedly the work of William B. Reed, had been inserted in his paper without his knowledge.[14]

Although Boileau was at liberty and his paper in full operation, the Democratic Club met to protest his arrest and five-day confinement. John C. Bullitt warned its excited members that there was a point at which human endurance snapped. If such an act as Boileau's arrest had occurred in New York, it would have led to

[12] Article on the inauguration of Democratic headquarters, *The Press,* Jan. 9, 1863.

[13] As quoted in *The Press,* Mar. 13, 1863.

[14] *Ibid.,* Feb. 4, 1863; *A Few Words for Honest Pennsylvania Democrats* [Philadelphia, 1863], 7–8.

civil war in the North. Here Bullitt was interrupted by someone who reported a rumor that the editor of the New York *World* had been arrested. "Then," cried Bullitt, "that act inaugurates a revolution in the North!" This statement aroused the most intense excitement and the applause was terrific. That anarchy had presumably descended upon the land was evidently not a matter of regret.[15]

Two nights later, at another meeting of the Democratic Club, the Reverend Chauncey C. Burr slashed out at the state of the nation: "Abraham Lincoln is a greater traitor than Jefferson Davis. [*Applause*] What has Jeff Davis done? He has merely infringed upon our territorial jurisdiction. He has not struck at the Constitution. . . . When the soul of this government is dead, I, for one, care not what becomes of the body." Burr maintained that if Lincoln's abolition policy was to continue, Davis would be fighting for the liberties not only of the South, but of the North as well.[16]

Intensifying their campaign for peace, Democratic leaders insisted that Lincoln had usurped power and was not the true representative of the people. Worse yet, they claimed that "Mr. Lincoln's administration has no support at all that is not venal."[17] His proclamation of emancipation had changed the whole purpose of the war. No longer was it a war for the Union; now it was for the Negro. The proclamation was illegal, so was the conscription act, the legal tender act, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. With so much to attack, the Democrats stepped up their campaign. A new Democratic daily, *The Age,* was established in March, 1863, to promote their views. Colonel Charles J. Biddle became chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee.[18]

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[15] *The Press,* Feb. 2, 1863.

[16] *Ibid.,* Feb. 4, 1863.

[17] *The Age,* Apr. 23, 1863.

[18] *The Age* was first issued Mar. 25, 1863. Its editors and proprietors were A. J. Glossbrener, Francis J. Grund, and William H. Welsh. Boileau's *Evening Journal* went out of business in the fall. The only other Democratic paper in Philadelphia was the *Sunday Mercury.*

Democratic spokesmen were unsparing in their assaults on the party in power; a fever of excitement distorted their perspective. Nothing irritated them more than the abolitionist claim that slavery was at fault. Edward Ingersoll quashed that notion: "It is not African slavery that is the root of all evil, it is the *hatred* of African slavery, it is this mad philosophy of Abolitionism." Of the proclamation of emancipation, he challenged: "In the history of the world, what governmental atrocity has equaled this? . . . Do I exaggerate, fellow citizens, or mislead you when I say before the atrocities of this governmental decree, St. Bartholomew and King Herod pale and dwindle? The nation grows sick and weary of the dreadful war into which the decrees of Abolitionism have plunged us and the northern country begins to sigh for peace."[19]

On June 1, 1863, the Democrats worked up party enthusiasm at a mass meeting at Independence Hall, when they protested the arrest of Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio, whose freedom of speech had been so arbitrarily infringed. Many were the indignant speeches on civil liberty. "We live in an intolerant and proscriptive community," complained Peter McCall. "It is no longer the city of Brotherly Love."[20] The meeting passed off quietly despite fears that indignant Union men would break it up. The Philadelphia diarist, Sidney George Fisher, denounced the meeting and "the abominable clique who persistently denounce the war, abuse the soldiers and the government, attempt to create discord among the people and to divide the people and thus encourage the enemy. These Democrats are known thoroughly to sympathize with the South. . . ." On the subject of freedom of speech, Fisher sardonically recalled that it was one of the city's leading Democrats who at a public meeting in 1859 openly advocated mob action to prevent George William Curtis from making a speech on slavery.[21]

[19] Speech of Edward Ingersoll before the Democratic Central Club, *The Age*, June 15, 1863.

[20] *Ibid.*, June 2, 1863.

[21] Fisher Diary, June 1, 1863; correspondence on the Curtis lecture is preserved in the Alexander Henry Papers, HSP.

Not all Democrats were happy with the party leadership in Philadelphia. One dissident warned that the policy followed was bound to keep the Republicans in office: "No party since the origin of the government that waged indiscriminate opposition to the prosecution of a war in which the country was engaged has ever obtained power." Opposition to the war was moral treason: "This has a destructive effect on the popularity of any party. . . . To be *suspected* of being an ally of the enemy is terribly injurious to any individual or party; but to be such an ally in fact, to deprecate the severity of measures pursued for his destruction, to oppose the raising of men and money for the purpose of defeating the enemy, to denounce all war measures, and clamor for a dishonorable peace, constitute such a crime against one's own country that sooner or later it must overwhelm with confusion and destruction those that are guilty of the offense. . . . The people will distrust the patriotism of those who make war on the Administration while they extend the olive branch to armed enemies of the Republic."[22]

Democrats who thought like this writer were called "War Democrats." They did not control the party machine in Philadelphia where every effort was made to save slavery and end the war. In this connection, Sidney George Fisher recorded a conversation with a leading Democrat who insisted that the legal tender act was unconstitutional because no express power was given in the Constitution for such a purpose. Fisher quoted the authorities to prove that the power was implied, that it was essential to the power of making war since it was impossible to carry on a war without resort to paper money. "But we don't want the government to carry on this war," replied the Democrat. Fisher later mentioned meeting this man on the street just after news had arrived of Burnside's disaster at Fredericksburg: "He expressed such exultation and

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[22] *An Address to the Democracy of the United States on the Duty of the Democratic Party at this Crisis* (Philadelphia, 1863).

delight at the defeat of the Union army and his language was so violent and extravagant that I was disgusted."[23]

The diarist and most Union men believed that "The quarrel must be fought out until no cause for quarrel remains, or peace would be temporary and be indeed not peace but a cessation of active hostilities which would soon be renewed." He deplored the Democratic attitude: "These Democrats can see in this great war only a party contest. Every victory of the government they lament as a defeat of their party; in every success of the rebels they see a party victory and hail it with triumph. In all possible ways they oppose the administration and thus encourage the enemy to persevere. Their treasonable speeches are republished in the South. They are evidence of a divided North. Division is weakness and our weakness is strength for the enemy."[24]

The bloody New York draft riots in July, 1863, showed how divided the North was. New York City was a Democratic stronghold. Its masses of voters were constantly excited by incendiary harangues on the misconduct and iniquity of the war, the corruption and lack of ability of the administration, the dangers of abolitionism, and the illegality of the conscription act. No wonder they rioted when the authorities tried to put the draft into effect. Philadelphia was spared this disgrace. The day before the Philadelphia draft was to be drawn, Major General George Cadwalader, who had so signally crushed the city's ill-famed nativist riots in 1844, received the following message from Washington: "General, Please report immediately in person to this Department. Yours truly, Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War."[25] Stanton ordered Cadwalader to Philadelphia as military commander. His presence

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[23] Fisher Diary, Aug. 1 and Dec. 17, 1862.

[24] *Ibid.*, May 8 and 18, 1863.

[25] Stanton to Cadwalader, July 14, 1863, General George Cadwalader Section, Military Papers, Civil War, August, 1861–December, 1863, Cadwalader Collection, HSP.

there, abetted by the vigilant activity of Mayor Alexander Henry, prevented difficulty.

Local and state issues played little part in the Democratic campaign of 1863, a campaign designed as a lever to prevent Lincoln's re-election in the following year. Three major lines of attack, all of them national in scope, were adopted—the justification of slavery in the South, intensified efforts to arrive at a peace, criticism of governmental measures deemed to be unconstitutional.

Of these three, the slavery issue was the most important. Sidney George Fisher followed with interest the efforts of the Democrats to rally the North to the support of this unfortunate cause. "Slavery," he wrote, "is the chief element of strength to the Northern Democratic Party because by their reckless and unscrupulous support of it, they maintain the alliance of the Southern people. By means of this alliance they have hitherto governed the country. The Democrats therefore will exert their whole strength to save slavery if possible."[26]

George M. Wharton explained later how they planned to do this: "Elections in some of the more populous northern states were approaching, and it was thought that if public opinion, expressed through the ballot-box, could be brought to bear upon the Administration so as to indicate a dissent by the majority from their policy a change of measures looking to an adjustment by negotiation of our differences with the South might occur." To stimulate public opinion, Colonel Charles J. Biddle, Peter McCall, and Wharton obtained from Bishop John Henry Hopkins of Vermont permission to republish his 1861 pamphlet entitled the *Bible View of Slavery*.[27]

The Philadelphia edition of this work sustaining slavery on

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[26] Fisher Diary, Sept. 10, 1863.

[27] M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *A Reply to the Letter of Bishop Hopkins Addressed to Dr. Howe in the Print called "The Age" of December 8, 1863* (Philadelphia, 1864).

religious grounds was soon distributed, and a new printing of it was brought out by the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge in New York, of which the inventor Samuel F. B. Morse was president. Pennsylvania was flooded with this campaign document. In July, 1863, the corresponding secretary of Morse's society wrote to Peter McCall: "New York is able and willing to maintain her liberties and to aid your state in regaining hers from abolition encroachment. . . . Our chief care for the next three months is to do all we can to elect your governor." And the next month, the secretary wrote McCall: "I may mention to you that the Bishop's letter outruns every tract on our list. Thousands of it in a day go west. We regard the election in your state as more important than that in N. York. We are working earnestly for it."[28]

In short, Bishop Hopkins' treatise became the major campaign document of the day. It was not, however, in exactly the same form as when first issued in 1861, for the Bishop had deleted his favorable attitude toward secession.[29]

Justice George W. Woodward of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania was the Democratic candidate for governor. Since Woodward was an Episcopalian, the endorsement of slavery by the Episcopal Bishop of Vermont suggested that the Episcopal Church approved the Democratic platform on slavery. Not unnaturally, the Episcopal clergy of Pennsylvania were deeply disturbed. More than eighty per cent of them disagreed with Bishop Hopkins. In their resentment of his intrusion into their diocese and his lending his support to a political party, Bishop Alonzo Potter of Pennsylvania and one hundred and sixty of his clergy published a vehement protest: "This attempt not only to apologize for slavery in the abstract, but to advocate it as it exists in the cotton states, and in states which sell men and women in the open market as their staple

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[28] C. Mason to McCall, July 6 and Aug. 31, 1863, Peter McCall Correspondence, Cadwalader Collection.

[29] John Henry Hopkins, Jr., *The Life of the Late Right Reverend John Henry Hopkins* (New York, 1875), 320.

product is, in their judgment, unworthy of any servant of Jesus Christ. As an effort to sustain, on Bible principles, the states in rebellion against the government, in the wicked attempt to establish by force of arms a tyranny under the name of a Republic whose 'cornerstone' shall be the perpetual bondage of the African, it challenges their indignant reprobation."[30] This was strong language. The protest so incensed Justice Woodward that he asked Peter McCall and George M. Wharton to act as his counsel in a suit he determined to bring against Bishop Potter. "I don't know," wrote Woodward, "that the cunning old fox who struts as Bishop has been at the League or has preached Abolitionism or anything else indeed. But of falsehood and slander he can be convicted." Evidently, McCall and Wharton discouraged the judge from bringing suit.[31]

Peace continued to be the fondest hope of Philadelphia Democrats in 1863. Alexander Fullerton, Jr., was almost hysterical on the subject. "What a picture for the American citizen! A government dishonored and powerless, a treasury empty or filled with rags, tyranny rampant and ruin certain. From what has been said, one fact is evident, one lesson to be learned. This state of things must cease, America must again be free. Coercion has been the cause of our troubles; it must exist no longer. . . . Our only hope is in *peace*. It was so in the beginning; how much more after a desolating and bloody war. Peace, peace, *on any terms, at any price,* anything to end this fratricidal war."[32]

The restrained, official attitude of the party organization was expressed by Colonel Biddle: "It is not the interest of Pennsylvania

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[30] *Protest of the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Pennsylvania against Bishop Hopkins' Letter on African Slavery* (Philadelphia, 1863).

[31] Woodward to McCall, Oct. 23, 1863, Peter McCall Correspondence, Cadwalader Collection. There is no mention of such a suit in M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *Memoirs of the Life and Services of the Rt. Rev. Alonzo Potter* (Philadelphia, 1871).

[32] Alexander Fullerton, Jr., *Coercion, A Failure, Necessarily and Actually* (Philadelphia, 1863), 16.

that a fanatical faction shall pervert and protract the war for ruinous, perhaps unattainable, ends. What the North needs is the return of the South. . . . This end can never be reached upon the principles of the party now in power. Their principles are radically false and can never lead to a good conclusion. This hope of setting up the Negro in the place of the white man runs counter to the laws of race, the laws of nature."[33]

Although Colonel Biddle took to the field three times during the Civil War in defense of his native state, he cannot be classified as a "War Democrat," an all-out exponent of the war effort like Francis J. Grund. Grund had been the chief editor of the Democratic *Age,* but had left it after differing with his partners on the war issue. "My Democratic friends tell me," said Grund, "that this is the proper time for negotiation. Negotiation with whom? Negotiation in regard to what? Can the government negotiate with traitors? Can there be a question as to what ought to satisfy the government? The southern people must either lay down their arms and return to the old allegiance, or they must be brought back by force. There is no other ground." Grund ridiculed the peace party as being demented.[34]

During the heat of the campaign, the Democrats sought to discredit the administration by challenging the legality of its measures. The constitutionality of the conscription act and of Lincoln's proclamation suspending the writ of habeas corpus in the case of drafted men were both tested in the District Court of the United States, where Judge John Cadwalader in September, 1863, affirmed the constitutionality of both measures.[35] Charles Ingersoll,

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[33] Address of Charles J. Biddle, *The Age,* Aug. 13, 1863.

[34] Speech of Francis J. Grund, *The Press,* Sept. 29, 1863. For an obituary of Grund, see *ibid.,* Oct. 1, 1863.

[35] It was believed that Democratic judges who owed their positions to appointment, like Judge Cadwalader, rather than to popular election were less influenced by party policies. Cadwalader, who had been a partisan Democrat and congressman, paid little heed to party clamor after his elevation to the federal bench.

George M. Wharton, Peter McCall, and George W. Biddle, party leaders all, then took the conscription act to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.[36] In this court they were virtually certain of success, because of its five judges four were Democrats and, of these, two headed the Democratic ticket—Woodward, who was running for governor, and Chief Justice Walter H. Lowrie, whose term was nearly up and who was running for re-election.

On Constitution Day, September 17, 1863, a mass meeting of Democrats at Independence Square adopted two resolutions which fairly stated their position: "Resolved, That the policy of Negro emancipation, which has been substituted by the Abolitionists for the original object of the war, is alike unconstitutional and impolitic. It oversteps the powers of the Federal government; it stimulates opposition to reunion; it counteracts the efforts of our gallant soldiers, and unites for protracted and desperate resistance the white race in the southern states"; and "Resolved, That the Democracy of Pennsylvania have ever been true to the cause of the Union. . . . that we denounce the least intimation that the Democratic Party entertains now, or ever has entertained, or ever can entertain, the slightest sympathy with the gigantic rebellion, or with traitors in arms against the Government, or would ever consent to peace upon any terms involving a dismemberment of the Union, as utterly unjust. . . ."[37]

Although there were plenty of Southern sympathizers in the party, the essential loyalty of the Democrats is unquestioned. Nevertheless, much of what their leaders said and did ran counter to a hearty prosecution of the war. Their words, sometimes taken out of the context of the time in which they had been said, were subject, at the very least, to misunderstanding. Woodward, for example, was haunted by a speech he had made in December, 1860. Addressing a meeting in Philadelphia designed to soothe the feelings of the South and to solve the problems that threatened

[36] *The Age*, Sept. 24, 1863.
[37] *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1863.

to tear the nation apart, he had said: "And thus it happens that the Providence of that Good Being who has watched over us from the beginning, and saved us from external foes, has so ordered our internal relations as to make Negro slavery an incalculable blessing to us. . . . We must arouse ourselves and reassert the rights of the slaveholder, and add such guarantees to our Constitution as will protect his property from the spoliation of religious bigotry and persecution, or else we must give up our Constitution and Union. Events are placing the alternative plainly before us: Constitutional Union and liberty according to American law, or else extinction of slave property, Negro freedom, dissolution of the Union and anarchy and confusion."[38] Sentiments such as this when reprinted in 1863 did little to reassure Union men. No wonder Jay Cooke wrote the Secretary of the Treasury: "It would be *horrible* if Woodward were to carry Penna., and many think he *will*."[39]

Despite Republican nervousness, the Democrats were overwhelmed at the polls in October, 1863, when Woodward and Lowrie were both defeated and control of City Councils passed to the Union Party. The final Democratic attempt that fall to undermine the Lincoln administration also ended in failure. In November, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ruled the conscription act unconstitutional by a vote of 3 to 2,[40] but in December, Justice Lowrie's term expired, a new judge took his place, and in January, 1864, again by a vote of 3 to 2, the Supreme Court reversed itself. Thus, by degrees, as the tide of war began to favor the North, power and political advantage ebbed from the Democratic Party.

For a time after their defeat, Philadelphia Democrats were rather subdued, although in February they forced a decision in the

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[38] *Democratic Opinions on Slavery: 1776–1863* [Philadelphia, 1863].

[39] Cooke to Salmon P. Chase, Sept. 7, 1863, Jay Cooke Papers, HSP.

[40] The federal government did not contest the case since it did not recognize the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania court in ruling on a federal measure.

District Court on the constitutionality of legal tender notes. The case went against them in a 2 to 1 decision, there being two Union men and one Democrat on the bench. "It seems now established," wrote Sidney George Fisher, "that the judges construe the Constitution according to their political feelings."[41]

It is interesting to trace in Fisher's diary the effect of the war on individuals. The diarist had a first cousin, wealthy Joshua Francis Fisher, whose wife came from one of the most distinguished families of Charleston, South Carolina. Her father, Henry Middleton, had been governor of the state, and her grandfather, Arthur Middleton, had been one of its signers of the Declaration of Independence.

In August, 1861, the diarist recorded: "Met Fisher in the street. He talks in the most absurd manner, professes to be for the Union, but denounces the war and Mr. Lincoln in bitter and violent terms." A year later, the diarist called on his cousins and found that "Mrs. Fisher was excited—her feelings are strong, her reasoning weak. Fisher wavers and has not yet made up his mind on which side he is, but abuses the administration for its anti-slavery measures, because they 'will irritate the South.' His notion seems to be that in this war the chief duty of the government is to protect slavery & put down Northern abolitionists." And, six months later, "Met Joshua Fisher. He is more violent than ever about the war and I really fear that his mental and bodily health will be seriously affected. He absolutely raves incoherently."[42]

Several days before the battle of Gettysburg, the diarist observed of his cousin: "His sympathies are wholly with the rebels, whom he calls 'gentlemen and Christians,' and he heartily wishes them success. He is really glad that they have invaded Pennsylvania and I have no doubt that the Democrats whose opinions accord with his fully agree with him." The decision at Gettysburg did

[41] Fisher Diary, Feb. 23, 1864.

[42] *Ibid.*, Aug. 27, 1861; July 13, 1862; Jan. 3, 1863.

nothing to mollify Joshua Fisher. Indeed, it made him "more outrageous than ever." The diarist decided to avoid him.[43]

However, sometime later, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Fisher came calling. "They would talk about the war, tho Bet and I tried to avoid the subject, and they uttered a great deal of treasonable nonsense, Mrs. F. exulting very much in the successful defence of Charleston and both expressing the hope and belief that the rebels would eventually triumph, showing themselves indeed thorough partizans of the South in all its most extravagant claims, and denouncing with unmeasured bitterness Mr. Lincoln, the government and the Northern people. The first, according to Fisher, is an ignorant black-guard, the second corrupt and tyrannical, the last a mere mob. Liberty is destroyed, he said, all security for property at an end, refined and gentlemanlike life henceforward impossible, and he wished his children were all dead rather than see them live in such a country and under such a government."[44]

A month after this painful conversation with his cousins, the diarist was subjected to a visit from an ardent Democrat who devastated poor Fisher's day. "He declared that the Southern people were right. That slavery was attacked and they were justified in rebellion. That slavery was a divine institution, but whether right or wrong was protected by the Constitution which was our supreme law behind which no one could go. That no one had a right to speak against slavery. That the South would prevail and the Union be restored in the blood of abolitionists. That ere long the war would be brought into the North and array father against son, brother against brother, but that in the end, after anarchy and violence, the Democrats and the South would prevail and slavery be more firmly established than ever, and much more of such rabid trash. What he said reveals the sentiments of many of his party, for he is by no means alone in his opinions. His

[43] *Ibid.*, June 27, 1863; July 12, 1863.
[44] *Ibid.*, Mar. 16, 1864.

notion that there is no higher law than the Constitution and that freedom of speech should be suppressed for the sake of slavery shows what his political nature is made of."[45]

In the summer of 1864, the Democratic Party mounted its last great political campaign of the Civil War. The principal difference between the parties was their views on slavery. Lincoln was willing to entertain terms of peace, providing they allowed for the restoration of the Union and the abolition of slavery; his opponent, George B. McClellan, was willing to continue slavery: "The Union is the one condition of peace—we ask no more."[46]

A negotiated peace still ranked uppermost in Democratic hearts. George M. Wharton pleaded for it. Let the South keep its slaves. He argued that war was not the proper way to preserve the Union: "If the war fails, *compulsory separation* from the South follows. Peace can at the worst lead to a *voluntary separation*. Is that worse than the other?"[47]

"My dear boy, what are the articles of thy belief?" asked someone of a Copperhead. And this was the creed he heard:

> I believe in one country, one Constitution, one destiny.
>
> And in George B. McClellan, formerly general in chief of the armies of the United States; Who was born of respectable parents; Suffered under Edwin M. Stanton; Was refused reinforcements, and descended into the swamps of the Chickahominy; He was driven therefrom by fire and by sword, and upon the seventh day of battle ascended Malvern Hill, from whence he withdrew to Harrison's Landing, where he rested many days; He returned to the Potomac, fought the battle of Antietam, and was removed from his high command and entered into oblivion; From this he shall one day arise and be elevated to the Presidential chair, there to dispense his favors upon all who follow him, and who firmly rest upon the Platform of the party to which he belongs.
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> I also believe in the unalienable doctrine of State Rights; In the

[45] *Ibid.*, Apr. 23, 1864.

[46] McClellan's letter of acceptance, Sept. 8, 1864, as published in *Campaign Document, No. 10. Address of Hon. George Ticknor Curtis, at Philadelphia, Sept. 30, 1864.*

[47] *The Age*, Oct. 29, 1864.

admission of slavery into the territories; In the illegality of the Confiscation Act, of the Conscription, of the Suspension of Habeas Corpus, of Arbitrary Arrests, and of the Proclamation of Emancipation; And I finally believe in a Peace which is beyond everybody's understanding. . . .[48]

Philadelphia Democracy was still committed to its peace policy, which included a built-in guarantee of slavery. *The Age* announced that, after four years of failure to restore the Union by war, its platform called for immediate efforts to be made for the cessation of hostilities "with a view to an ultimate convention of all the states, or other peaceable means, to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the states."[49] Charles Ingersoll, still insisting that the South did not want separation, urged the North to explore peace possibilities with Southern commissioners.[50]

The alternative policy was explained by *The Age* in the following manner: "This is the Lincoln platform. The war must go on, no matter at what sacrifice to the white freemen of America. It is not for the Union but for the African. Until the Negro is emancipated and placed upon an equality with the white race, blood must continue to flow. . . . Taxes, ruin, bloodshed, and bankruptcy must all be endured—the people must suffer untold miseries—while the clown and buffoon at the head of the government, with a vulgar jest upon his lips, and the echo of the ribald song he called for at Antietam ringing in his ears, asks the American people to re-elect him to the high position he has so utterly disgraced!"[51]

And re-elect him they did. In November, 1864, the Democratic Party in Philadelphia was routed. Its defeat and the victorious course of the Northern armies deepened the gloom of

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[48] *The Copperhead Catechism* (New York, 1864).

[49] *The Age,* Sept. 1, 1864.

[50] Speech of Charles Ingersoll before the Democratic Association of the Eleventh Ward, *ibid.,* Sept. 23, 1864.

[51] *Ibid.,* June 29, 1864.

the local Democratic newspaper. Neither its editors nor the politicians could realize that their leadership had hurt rather than promoted their party. The Democratic following had declined because of the suspected disloyalty of some Democratic leaders and the uncertain patriotism of others. Its press was deemed to be sympathetic with the South, and the constant apology it offered for slavery had become offensive.[52]

On February 17, 1865, *The Age* expressed the full measure of its bitterness in an editorial entitled "War Democrats." Such people were denounced as abolitionists in disguise. It was impossible to be a Democrat opposed to the policy of the administration but in favor of carrying on a vigorous war effort. This was the reason why: "Now, as the war, if carried on at all, can only be prosecuted by the present Administration, and will be prosecuted, of course, upon no policy other than the wicked and barbarous one to which it is pledged, and to which it has adhered in the past, the creed of the 'War Democrat' is just this. 'I am opposed to the emancipation of the Negro, but in favor of shedding the blood of thousands of my own race to effect it. I am in favor of seeing my country beggared in the vigorous prosecution of the war, but I detest the object for which it is being prosecuted. I abhor military arrests, the suppression of newspapers, and the insulting dictation of military despots, but I am in favor of furnishing the Abolitionists with the men and means necessary to the vigorous perpetration of these outrages.' " How much closer could a paper come to treason than to tell a party that comprised half the voters of the North that they could not support the war? *The Age* complained of the suppression of newspapers, yet it could publish such editorials as this without hindrance.

Evidently, this Philadelphia paper, and presumably many of its readers, did not want to see the North victorious. On March 3, 1865, *The Age* jeered at the other papers in the city for their

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[52] *The Press*, Mar. 15, 1864.

belief that the struggle was all but over. What an absurd notion; why, the war could go on for another ten years. The South was far from exhausted. Lee was going to add a million Negroes to his army. Peace was by no means just at hand. Six months hence, people would see how ridiculous the concept of victory over the South was. In fact, the war would never end until Louis Napoleon intervened on behalf of the Confederacy.

Factually and with notable want of enthusiasm, *The Age* reported the fall of Richmond on April 4, the editors releasing their sense of frustration by painting a horrible characterization of Lincoln. In muted fashion on April 11, *The Age* recorded Lee's surrender. The war ended with secession a dead issue, but it would take time for many people to accept the fact.

On April 13, 1865, a Philadelphia Democrat addressed the Anti-Abolition State Rights Society in New York. Advocating the repudiation of the national debt illegally incurred by what he termed an unconstitutional war, this lawyer went on to say: "I yield to no man in sympathy for the people of the South, a gallant people struggling nobly for their liberty against as sordid and vile a tyranny as ever proposed the degradation of our race—nay, I go further, and with Jefferson, Madison, and Livingston, I fully embrace the doctrine of secession as an American doctrine, without the element of which American institutions cannot permanently live."[53]

The next day Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. What then had *The Age* to say of him, after having pursued him with vituperation and ridicule ever since its founding? Its editorial read: "No where, such is our proud consciousness, has sorrow for Mr. Lincoln's death been more unaffected and sincere than it is at this moment in the ranks of the great Democratic party, of whose views we try to be an exponent." The homes of leading Democrats were

[53] John A. Marshall, *American Bastille. A History of the Illegal Arrests and Imprisonment of American Citizens During the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1869), 134; *Evening Bulletin,* Apr. 21, 1865; Fisher Diary, Apr. 21, 1865.

draped in mourning cloths, Joshua Francis Fisher's house included. They had been told by Mayor Henry that unless they did so he would not be responsible for the security of their property in the face of possible mob violence. This expression of their mourning was about as sincere as the editorial in *The Age*.[54]

"The forbearance of the people has been wonderful," wrote Sidney George Fisher. "The Democrats in their speeches and their press have denounced the war and its motives and purposes, glorified in every rebel victory, mourned over their defeats, vilified the North, abused every officer of the government and above all Mr. Lincoln on whom they have lavished every epithet of scorn and contempt; he was a usurper, a tyrant, a blackguard, a ruffian, a buffoon, a gorilla, a kangaroo, and his administration was worse than an eastern despotism. They have been permitted to do this without check or molestation, thus refuting their own charges. At length Mr. Lincoln has been murdered. . . ."[55]

The bitterness which existed between Republicans and Democrats could no longer affect Lincoln. He needed neither sympathy from enemy nor eulogy from friend. The purpose which epitomized his leadership transcended party lines, for it was the great national essential in which both parties believed—the restoration of the Union. The oratory of rival party chieftains has long since been forgotten, but the faith that Lincoln expressed when he first took up the reins of government is still with us in imperishable words: "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every loving heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

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[54] *The Age*, Apr. 17, 1865; Fisher Diary, Apr. 17, 1865.

[55] *Ibid.*, Apr. 15, 1865.

MONCURE CONWAY *and* GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

LOYD D. EASTON

April 24, 1969

Loyd D. Easton

Loyd Easton has been Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Ohio Wesleyan University since 1952, has served on the National Council, American Association of University Professors, 1962–1963, and as President of the Ohio Philosophical Association, 1964–1967. His works include Ethics, Policy and Social Ends, *1955,* Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, *1967, and (with a chapter on Moncure Conway) his* Hegel's First American Followers, the Ohio Hegelians, *published in the same year. Appropriately, Conway as a subject brought an innovation in the Spahr Lecture series. Dr. Easton's lecture was followed by that of Warren Smith on the next day, with the addition of a "Public Conversation" between the two, a new approach which gives promise to students and others of enhanced interest and value.*

MONCURE CONWAY *and* GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

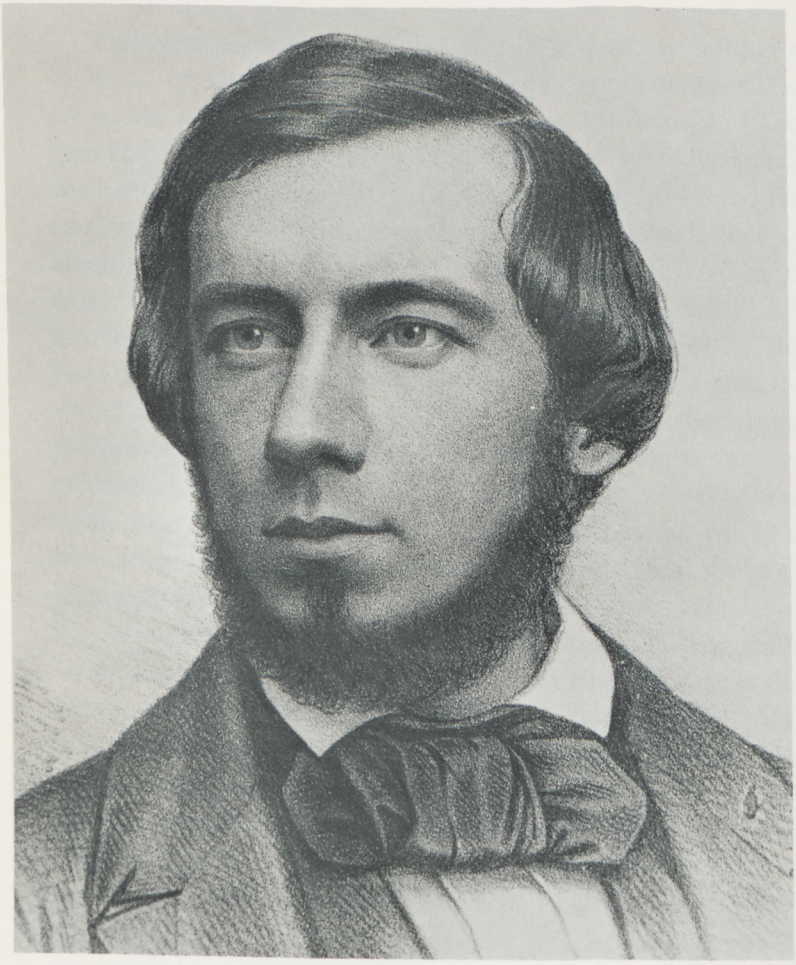
IN THE writings and public views of Moncure Conway there were two related and developing themes in which his specific ideas on religion and social reform were rooted. The first theme was his religious naturalism, his view that God—all that is divine and holy—is to be found in the processes of nature and history, not in a separate transcendent realm accessible through some special revelation or church authority. In the development of this theme German philosophy was a major importance, particularly the views of Georg Hegel, David Friedrich Strauss, and Ludwig Feuerbach. The second theme, developing and buttressing the first, was Conway's view of nature as a dynamic unity manifest in the pervasive processes of evolution. On this ground he defended the unity and brotherhood of all men, the essential premise of his commitment to the abolitionist cause and movements for democratic social reform. Further, his attachment to the theory of evolution impelled him to defend for religion and all areas of social life the openness to new ideas, sustained inquiry, and responsiveness to rational evidence that characterizes the scientific temper.

I

Conway's ancestors and parents had a part in setting the direction of his thought. His family was long-established and prominent in Virginia, related to the Taylors, Madisons, and Lees.[1] One of his ancestors had signed the Declaration of Independence, and another had strongly opposed slavery but was prevented from freeing his slaves by Virginia law. Conway's grandfather had absorbed liberal religious views at the College of William and Mary from a band of rationalists called the "Illuminati" after the German society founded by Adam Weishaupt. In 1829, three years before Moncure Conway's birth, his parents had been converted from the moribund Episcopal Church to Methodism and became leaders in the Methodist movement. Though they were methodical in religious practice, they remained detached from camp meeting emotionalism and were more interested in the Methodist commitment to humanitarian reform than matters of dogmatic theology.

As a result of his family's Methodism, Conway entered Dickinson College in 1847 after five years at the Fredericksburg Classical and Mathematical Academy. At Dickinson he studied mathematics, natural science, Greek and Latin, English, and church history. His courses in chemistry and zoology were well taught by professors who later became nationally prominent. In addition to required studies he read widely in eighteenth century novelists and such American literature as he could find. He participated in the college philosophical society and at one of its meetings defended an unbelieving classmate who had been forced to argue for Christianity. Thus Conway was already sensitive to freedom of mind. Gnawing questions about the moral justification of

[1] Biographical details, unless otherwise noted, are from Moncure Daniel Conway, *Autobiography, Memories and Experiences,* 2 vols. (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1904), and Mary Elizabeth Burtis, *Moncure Conway* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1952).



MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

Class of 1849

From a lithograph in the collection of Dr. Laurence C. Staples

slavery came into his thinking as he joined in a protest against the antislavery position of a prominent professor. During his second year at Dickinson, Conway attended a series of prayer-meetings in a nearby church. Determined to be converted, he went forward to the altar and "*resolved* never to stop from that moment," he said, "until I enjoyed religion in my heart." Presently he joined the Methodist Church.

After graduation from college Conway returned to Virginia in an aimless mood. He tried studying law but was also attracted to journalism through the influence of a companionable cousin who edited a Richmond paper.

Conway's aimlessness was resolved, however, in 1850, a crucial year in his life. In that year he published his first extensive writing, a pamphlet on the deplorable state of education in Virginia. More important, he discovered Ralph Waldo Emerson whose views profoundly redirected his thinking. Coming upon an extract of Emerson's essay on "History," Conway was deeply moved and immediately purchased a copy of the *Essays, First and Second Series*. Emerson brought him, Conway said, a "revelation" but also precipitated a "spiritual crisis," "subtly inbreeding discontent in me of faith in myself." The "revelation," however, had positive results in Conway's decision to become a Methodist minister. He found that Emerson's views "did away with the bounds between sacred and secular by making both sacred." Free of theological negations, they widely agreed with the Methodist emphasis on personal experience and indifference to dogma. "I cannot remember," Conway observed, "ever hearing a Methodist sermon about the Trinity."

Conway's appointment as a Methodist minister by the Baltimore Conference made him a circuit rider. His travels brought him into contact with some Hicksite Quakers whose spiritual self-possession and creedless religion much impressed him and reinforced ideas he had found in Emerson. As a circuit rider Conway lived and studied out of his saddlebags in which he carried, in

addition to the Bible and Methodist Discipline, Emerson's *Essays,* Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection,* and Carlyle's *Latter Day Pamphlets.* Emerson's transcendentalism, denying any gulf between sacred and secular and viewing God as nature's indwelling presence, set Conway firmly on the road to religious naturalism. This direction was reinforced by his study of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* which had significantly shaped Emerson's transcendentalism between 1829 and 1832.[2] Coleridge's book aimed to give the general reader some of the basic ideas of Immanuel Kant and use them in the direction that Hegel had taken toward unifying the realms of nature and faith. In particular, Coleridge utilized Kant's distinction between sense-based, analytical judgments of the Understanding on one side and necessary, universal principles of Reason on the other. Thus there was a distinction in kind between Understanding which beholds the material, phenomenal world and Reason which gives access to an intelligible, spiritual order. But Coleridge did not take this distinction as final in relation to the spiritual order. Again following Kant, he looked to Reason in its moral employment, Reason as involving conscience, to delineate the spiritual order of real freedom and ultimate ends.[3] Thus through Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* Conway was first exposed to German philosophy, to basic ideas of Immanuel Kant and the dualisms of Understanding and Reason, Nature and Spirit, that Hegel wanted to synthesize.

Even during his first year as a circuit rider, Conway began wrestling with doubts and wondered what he could honestly preach. In his own words, "The morally repulsive dogmas and atrocities ascribed to the deity in the Bible became impossible." He wrote to Emerson of his misgivings and received a friendly answer saying that a "true soul will disdain to be moved except

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[2] See H. A. Pochmann, *German Thought in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), pp. 165–68.

[3] See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Complete Works* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1853), pp. 241–53, 367. Cf. Pochmann, *op. cit.,* pp. 90–95.

by what natively commands it." Impressed by a Unitarian minister from Baltimore, Conway left his native Virginia in 1853 to attend Harvard Divinity School and find truer intellectual bearings.

At Harvard, Conway found most of the theologians trying to steer a middle course between Unitarian orthodoxy and "German Rationalism," the critical interpretation of the Bible inspired by David Friedrich Strauss who viewed miracles as spiritually significant myths. With the more radical-minded students Conway rallied around Emerson and Theodore Parker who became his real teachers. Conway established close personal ties with both Emerson and Parker. From conversations with Emerson he became interested in Goethe and often used passages from Goethe's writings as texts for his sermons and addresses. In retrospect Conway saw Emerson as the source of "the whole movement of reverent Freethought in America," "the most sweeping radical of his generation," whose distinctive views precipitated an intellectual and moral revolution. In holding that there is one Mind common to all men, an all-embracing intelligence containing each man's particular being, Emerson taught that the powers and rights of each belong to all. Such a view, Conway believed, induces a proper humility as it emancipates man from all masters.[4]

Conway admired Theodore Parker as "the standard-bearer of religious liberty" and was aware that his treatment of Biblical miracles had been shaped by "German rationalism," particularly the views of Strauss. While Parker was teaching school in the 1830s, "he entered," wrote Conway, "into the great deeps of German Thought and Theology, his acquaintance with which was not surpassed by that of any living man."[5] Parker had criticized Strauss's *Life of Jesus,* particularly its presuppositions in Hegelian

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[4] See M. D. Conway, "Emerson," London, 1873, manuscript in Conway Collection, Dickinson College Library.

[5] Conway, "Theodore Parker," *The Dial,* 1 (1860), pp. 446–47. See L. D. Easton, *Hegel's First American Followers* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1967), pp. 6–8.

metaphysics, but nevertheless rejoiced in its publication. He considered Strauss to be "an individual raised by God" to bridge the chasm between "stiff supernaturalism" and "the fair domain of free religious thought." Parker took the title for his famous sermon of 1841, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," from one of Strauss's essays, and his view of what was "transient" leaned heavily on Strauss's criticism of the Bible.

After graduation from Divinity School, Conway became pastor of the Unitarian Church in Washington, D. C. and brought to that position a well-crystallized abolitionist position in regard to slavery. He spoke out vigorously against the evils of slavery and reminded his congregation of its incompatibility with the brotherhood and unity of mankind. The sonship of God, Conway urged, means the brotherhood of all mankind, including the least of men. There is no ground whatsoever for treating some races as inferior. "Man is one, and one member cannot suffer but all suffer; one cannot be a slave but all are to some extent slaves."[6] With such views Conway was merely applying the religious perspective he had developed under the influence of Emerson, Parker, and indirectly "German rationalism." As he became increasingly outspoken on slavery, he was "rebuked" by his Washington congregation and finally dismissed in 1856 for persisting in the "desecration of his pulpit," whereupon he accepted appointment to the First Congregational Church of Cincinnati, Ohio.

II

Conway regarded Cincinnati as "the most cultivated of the western cities and found its rich cultural life much to his liking. With a third of its population German, there were many musical societies of high quality, theaters that attracted actors of inter-

[6] Conway, "The Old and The New," Washington, D.C., 1855; "What Is Man That Thou Art Mindful of Him?" Washington, D.C., 1856, manuscript in Conway Collection, Columbia University Library.

national eminence, and a flourishing program of opera. There were also well-established libraries, lecture programs and literary clubs. Conway threw himself into these activities with enthusiasm. "I was adopted in the clubs," he later noted, "and wrote criticisms of the classical concerts, the picture exhibitions, the operas, and plays." When his activities as a "dancing and theater-going preacher" drew adverse comment, he defended the theater from his pulpit as one of the community's most important institutions.

Conway was pleased to find the atmosphere of Cincinnati congenial to social reform, "to every new creed or social experiment." He noted that remnants of Father Rapp's Harmonists, Robert Owen's New Harmonists, and Fanny Wright's interracial community had all "found some nest in Cincinnati." Though Conway's congregation contained many of the city's wealthy and prominent citizens, including Judge Hoadly and Alphonso Taft, it was firmly antislavery in sentiment and in this respect shared the view that prevailed among the Germans. Hence Conway could address himself to other issues of reform, so his sermons concentrated on Jesus daily crucified in the poor, woman deprived of her rights, the prostitute unwillingly degraded, and the drunkard driven into misery. With his customary boldness he not only confronted his wealthy congregation with burning social issues but frequently wrote newspaper articles on them and lectured to Cincinnati's Jewish societies and German Turners.

Among the Germans with whom Conway associated and talked in the cultural center peculiar to Cincinnati, Wielert's saloon, he was closest to John B. Stallo and August Willich. Stallo was an active member of Conway's congregation and a prominent lawyer who had published a book in 1848 that extensively interpreted Hegel's philosophy for the first time in English and applied it to evolution in nature and democracy.[7] Though Conway was ac-

[7] Cf. J. B. Stallo, *General Principles of the Philosophy of Nature* in Easton, *op. cit.*, appendix, pp. 229–41, 262–78, and also 32–43.

quainted with Stallo's political views, he was apparently not aware of Stallo's great intellectual debt to Hegel. Conway was particularly impressed by August Willich and found him to be one of Cincinnati's most interesting citizens, an eloquent and vigorous leader of the labor movement. Under Stallo's persuasion, Willich had become editor of the *Cincinnati Republikaner, Organ der Arbeiter* and had made it, in Conway's judgment, "a strong and radical paper." Willich's study of Hegel and Feuerbach had earlier led him to resign his commission in the Prussian army and identify himself with the labor movement. He commanded a Workers' Legion in the German revolution of 1848 and subsequently became a member of the central committee of Marx's Communist League in London. After quarreling with Marx over the need for armed insurrection in Germany and France—a step that Marx firmly opposed—Willich came to America. Conway admiringly recalled how Willich led a torchlight demonstration in the streets of Cincinnati to protest the execution of John Brown. "In after years when I saw Garibaldi in London," said Conway, "I felt as if I had met him before in the form of my old friend Willich."[8]

The German atmosphere of Cincinnati furthered Conway's passage from a dynamic, supernaturalistic theism to what he called "theism evolved from the pantheism of the poets." He studied and absorbed Strauss's book on *The Life of Jesus;* it gave him further reasons for believing that Deity is to be found within the processes of nature and history so there is no basis for miracles of supernatural intervention. Strauss's book, moreover, amply reinforced Conway's distrust of the Bible taken literally and directly. Even during his first year as a Methodist minister he had found it full of "morally repulsive dogmas and atrocities."

In 1859 Conway preached a series of fateful sermons against the credibility of the miracles recorded in the Gospels. In what

[8] Conway, *Autobiography,* I, p. 269. Cf. Easton, *op. cit.,* pp. 162–67, 182–91.

was probably the last of the series he said, "I would rather never enter a pulpit again than enter it under the superstition of believing that the being I worship was one who established a religion by his ability to walk on water, or swear at a fruit tree so as to wither it."[9] Conway urged his congregation to reject "the star-announced supernatural Christ" for Christ as the "Ideal Man," "The Great Master of Spiritual Law." Such ideas alienated many of the congregation, and the conservatives overtly seceded. This was the beginning of the end of Conway's Cincinnati ministry.

Further, *The Dial* magazine, which Conway edited in Cincinnati as a successor to the earlier New England journal of the same name, testified to the increased influence of German thought on Conway's views. In its "Catholic Chapters" *The Dial* presented excerpts from Schiller, Goethe, and Hegel along with passages from Socrates, Emerson, and St. Augustine. Its longest series of articles was written by O. B. Frothingham on "The Christianity of Christ." Frothingham, a "later transcendentalist" and historian of the movement like Conway, had absorbed much of Hegel's thought. History was for him the essence of all things, and philosophy's primary category was "becoming" not "being." With "historical reason" thus pre-eminent, Frothingham's heroes were F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss. He viewed their "Left-Hegelian" philosophy—"Left" as suggested by the seating of radicals in the French parliament—as the authentic fulfillment of transcendentalism.[10] In his series on "The Christianity of Christ" Frothingham tried to show, in the spirit of Strauss and with Strauss's critical method, how much of Christianity is *not* of Christ and how increments of dogma and tradition have been engrafted, due to a variety of historical causes, on the few simple and human teachings of Jesus.

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[9] Conway, "Art Thou He That Should Come," Cincinnati, n.d. and London (omitting quoted passage), 1865, manuscript in Conway Collection, Columbia University Library.

[10] See O. B. Frothingham, *Transcendentalism in New England,* Intro. by S. E. Ahlstrom (New York: Harper and Bros., 1959), pp. 43–46, 356, xviii.

III

In a commemorative address some dozen years after he had left Cincinnati, Conway indicated in detail what Strauss and Hegel had meant to him in the development of his philosophy of religion. He had already paid some respect to Strauss in a London sermon defending him against Gladstone as "the Premier in the Kingdom of Reason" who had shown the incredibility of Gospel miracles as history and the need to "adore the grandeur of the universe as the shrine of the Supreme life-giving and law-making Reason." The commemorative address with fuller homage to Strauss was published both in London, where Conway was leader of The Ethical Society, and in *The Index,* a weekly journal of the Free Religion Association in Boston. While Conway was a contributing editor, *The Index* published a number of articles on German philosophy including a long, laudatory article on Ludwig Feuerbach, the Left-Hegelian thinker whose views were later to become central in Conway's own "religion of Humanity."

In his commemorative address Conway noted Strauss's debt to Hegel, the philosopher "destined to create an epoch in the history of the human mind." Referring to the massive impact of Hegel's thought, Conway held that

> We are all living in the Hegelian formation; and this whether we understand that philosophy or not, and even if we reject its terms. For Hegel was as a great vitalizing breath wafted from afar, beneath which, as under a tropical glow, latent seeds of thought were developed to most various results.

Conway precisely formulated the leading theme of Hegel's philosophy as follows:

> Its essence is the conception of an absolute idea which has represented itself in Nature, in order that by a progressive development through Nature it may gain consciousness in man, and return as mind to a deeper union with itself.[11]

[11] Conway, "David Friedrich Strauss," *The Index* 2 (April 1874), p. 158 (also in Easton, *op. cit.,* appendix, p. 301).

Such a view of the world, Conway allowed, had been partially anticipated in the Hindu conception of a universal soul of nature. But Hegel's formulation was particularly adapted to Western thought; its central meaning was reflected "in the materialism no less than in the idealism of our age, and may be felt in the philosophy of Huxley no less than in that of its best exponent, Emerson." Thus Conway not only identified Emerson's philosophy, which influenced him so deeply, with Hegel's but also saw Hegel's emphasis on the world's unitary process as being reflected in Huxley's evolutionism. Hegel's philosophy well expressed Conway's view that Deity is to be found within the processes of nature and history, not in a separate transcendent realm manifesting itself in miraculous, supernatural interventions.

Conway saw Strauss as the one who best comprehended the bearings of Hegel's philosophy on theology "by throwing off the mere form of his forerunner's doctrine, just as that philosopher had thrown off the formulas of his forerunners." Though Hegel thought of himself as an orthodox Christian, Strauss came to renounce orthodox Christianity. Though Hegel was designated an idealist, Strauss came to think of himself as a materialist. "But we must not," Conway warned, "be victims of the letter. Fruit is different from the blossom; but it is for all that, blossom in another form." From the "blossom" Strauss concluded that Hegel's philosophy was incompatible with miracles though it left room for mysticism. He studied the life of Christ as an historical phenomenon and found that the miracles in the New Testament were on the same footing as stories told about Apollo and Bacchus. They were myths generated by the thought-patterns of an unscientific age, not literal historical facts. Nevertheless they were important and significant for humanity. Formulating Strauss's view of myths, Conway held that

> They were born out of the human heart in every part of the world, and were types of its aspirations, hopes, and spiritual experiences.

> That which could not be respected as history could be reverenced as a reflection of the religious sentiment.[12]

Hence where the church set an individual, Strauss would put humanity. In Conway's quotation from Strauss:

> Humanity is the union of two natures—God becomes man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit.

Thus Conway found in Strauss foundations for his developing "religion of Humanity" as well as his position on miracles.

While Conway was correct in his estimate of Strauss's relation to Hegel, he did not elaborate the details of that relationship. In particular, he did not show how Strauss's idea of "myth" had applied Hegel's view that in religion truth takes the form of "imaginative presentation" transmitted by the community. Hegel maintained that apart from a philosophical or conceptual grasp of religious truth, Spirit—the true substance and reality of all things —takes "the form of the universal self-consciousness of a religious community." In that community events of the past are kept alive in sensuous form through "imagination." "Imaginative presentation," said Hegel, "constitutes the characteristic form in which spirit is conscious of itself in this its religious community."[13] Strauss's conception of "myth" was merely an extension and application of Hegel's view of an historically- and socially-formed "imaginative presentation." In the mythical interpretation of Biblical history, Strauss wrote, the higher intelligence at work in putatively historical events is "the spirit of a people or a community" and this spirit, not an immediate supernatural agency,

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 159 (also in Easton, *op. cit.*, p. 305).

[13] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans, by J. B. Baillie, rev. by C. J. Friedrich in *The Philosophy of Hegel* (New York: Modern Library, 1954), pp. 515–516.

gives them "an absolute inherent truth," not a specific and literal historical truth.

IV

During Conway's years in Cincinnati the second major motif in his thought, his adherence to an evolutionary view of the world and the scientific freedom it implied, was crystallized and firmly grounded. This motif reinforced the naturalistic view of God he developed under the influence of Emerson, Parker, Strauss, and Hegel.

Early in 1859 Conway "answered" the Rev. Dr. Horace Bushnell's defense of supernaturalism based on supposed evidence from geology. Conway cited what he had learned from Agassiz in Cambridge about embryonic development pointing to "the derivation of one species from another." Conway's book on the *Natural History of the Devil* also brought forward the idea of "arrested and progressive development" which he had derived from Emerson as early as 1854.[14] Conway regarded this idea as central in the pre-Darwinian history of evolution, showing that those who studied Emerson were building their faith on evolution before Darwin provided its scientific foundation. Apparently Conway was unaware that Emerson's pre-Darwinian view of evolution had been significantly shaped by the Hegelian book published in 1848 by his friend and fellow-Cincinnatian, John B. Stallo. Emerson had used evolutionary ideas from Stallo's book in the early 1850s and later noted that it had anticipated Darwin by a decade.

Prior to the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species,* Conway proclaimed the unity of man and nature. He held that man is

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[14] Conway, *Autobiography,* I, pp. 280–81. Cf. Conway, "Letter to Charles Eliot Norton," 4 April 1903, manuscript in Conway Collection, Dickinson College Library; Easton, *op. cit.,* pp. 46–49.

nature in quintessence. There are minerals in his skeleton, vegetable matter in his hair, and metal in his blood. "These things reappear in the human form," said Conway, "because the Law of the Universe is *Ascent.*" In the realm of mind the truths of science—"and rightly speaking there are no others"—become knowledge without ranting or violence, a surer road to truth that religion should follow.[15] With such views already entrenched in his thinking, Conway enthusiastically welcomed *The Origin of Species* and saw it as dealing a deathblow to the supernaturalism and miracles of "dogmatic Christianity." Darwin provided rigorous scientific support for the evolutionary view of the world, the idea of "progressive development," Conway had already found in Emerson and came to see clearly in Hegel.

Conway was especially enthusiastic about Strauss's last book, *The Old Faith and The New,* which ardently embraced the theory of evolution and applied it to religion. He quoted Strauss's view that nature consists of struggles contributing to the harmony of the whole and manifests graded development from lower to higher. Hence we are dependent not on rude power but on order and law, reason and goodness. The old Deity, then, must be replaced by "the law-governed Cosmos, full of life and reason" and deserving the same piety as the devout had always given to a supernatural Being. Conway particularly agreed with Strauss in opposing the traditional Christian dualism of soul and body, man and nature. This dualistic view of the world engendered by supernaturalism, Strauss told Conway on a visit to Heilbronn, reinforces superstition as the Siamese twin of political despotism and social degradation.[16]

Firmly committed to liberal social reform, Conway returned to Hegel to explain Strauss's conservatism as a member of the German legislature. Strauss, as Conway put it, distrusted sweeping away a

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[15] Conway, "A Discourse [On Truth]," Cincinnati, 1859, manuscript in Conway Collection, Columbia University Library.

[16] Conway, "David Friedrich Strauss," *op. cit.,* p. 159. Cf. *Autobiography,* II, pp. 13–14.

few snowdrifts when winter was still in the air. In this respect he correctly followed Hegel. "Those who study Hegel," Conway argued, "know that his apparent conservatism was the crust outside a fiery radicalism." Hegel saw history as the realization of liberty requiring a Reformation in religion. The French Revolution, missing this prerequisite, had led only to formal, external freedom. Full freedom, however, requires basic institutional changes, so Strauss broke with popular movements of his day because he saw that the institutional conditions of concrete freedom were being ignored.

As he developed his naturalistic view of religion Conway became aware of the problem of the shift in meaning of the key words he was using in his sermons and addresses. He became sensitive to the relation between language and thought and particularly to the way language can mislead thought. In this he anticipated the currently prominent preoccupation with semantics and "linguistic philosophy." What was needed, Conway concluded in the 1850's, is "a philosophy of words." Though Friedrich Schlegel and the Humboldts among the Germans had studied the bearing of language on race, "the naturalist of words had yet to appear." Conway saw language as the special mark of humanity in contrast to animality and as a distinctly social achievement. Language, he maintained, is "Nature humanizing." The various uses of words show that they are only "symbols" of things, not the fact itself. "The word *love,*" for example, "cannot do instead of loving." As knowledge changes and grows, the meanings of words change, as in the case of "sunrise" since Copernicus. Theology is particularly full of misleading uses of words whose emotional overtones—as in " "heretic" or "free-thinker"—widely prevent clear reasoning.[17] Conway saw his effort

[17] Cf. Conway, "The Word," *The Dial,* 1 (1860), pp. 98–99; "Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words," manuscript in Conway Collection, Columbia University Library.

to be a "naturalist of words" as essential to the development of a sound philosophy of liberal Christianity.

V

On leaving Cincinnati in 1862, Conway served for two years as editor of an abolitionist journal in Boston and then went to London to win sympathy for the Union cause. His increasingly virulent anti-slavery views led him to attack Lincoln as a "tool," and in a high pitch of excitement at one anti-slavery meeting he was ready to welcome world revolution to sweep away all forms of tyranny. He not only fought for complete emancipation but actively advocated intermarriage as the solution for the race problem, holding that intermarriage would result in a stronger people in every way. "The evening star of the epoch of separate races," said Conway, "is the morning star of Human Unity. Men we have, but not yet Man."

In 1864 Conway became permanent minister of the South Place Chapel (subsequently Ethical Society) in London, a position he held for thirty years with such distinction that the Society's meeting place on Red Lion Square now bears his name, Conway Hall. From London he contributed to Cincinnati newspapers a series of lively, sometimes sensational, letters that revealed the versatility of his interests as well as the boldness of his thinking. He reported, for example, details of the struggle between capital and labor in England and the valuable role of unions. He described the growth of the Chartist movement in relation to London poverty, the proceedings of a prison-reform congress, the views of exiled Russian nihilists, the opening of plays and art exhibits, and the activities of Parliament. Reporting on the refugees from the Paris Commune he tried to explode the myth of their blood-thirstiness and compared their views to those that had animated Brook Farm in Boston. His "radical religious and political opinions" were often vehemently attacked in the public press.

Soon after he was settled in London, he began associating with exiled revolutionists such as Mazzini, Louis Blanc, and Karl Blind. He was closest to Blind, an intimate friend of Marx in the 1850s, who persuaded him to give a series of lectures to "the working class" on "relations between employers and employees, cooperation, the elevation of woman, and national education." Association with Blind reinforced Conway's interest in German thought and culture. His address on the centenary of Alexander Humboldt's birth praised him as a great naturalist and referred to his book, *Cosmos,* as "a hymn to the unity and perfection of Nature," the keynote of the age. During the Franco-Prussian War, in which Conway observed the grim realities battle at Gravelotte, his sympathies were with Germany as fighting for a free fatherland that would resist any oppression Bismarck might impose on victor or vanquished. But Conway's sympathies for downtrodden humanity superseded his feelings for any particular nation. Soon he was writing in defense of the refugees from the Paris Commune and seeking aid for them in collaboration with Karl Marx.[18]

As Conway associated with British "rationalists" and the exiled Germans who published *Der Deutsche Eidgenoss*—Karl Blind aided by Ferdinand Freiligrath, Franz Sigel, and Ludwig Feuerbach in Germany—his thought moved through the view that nature is a "measureless organism of Reason" toward a "religion of Humanity," free of all traces of his former theism. This movement reflected the influence of Strauss and was crystallized under the impact of Feuerbach's book on *The Essence of Christianity.*

Strauss had not pursued the question of the psychological source of myths, the content of religion, but acknowledged that Feuerbach, another prominent Left-Hegelian, had found the answer. In a parallel movement in 1880 Conway turned to a study of Feuerbach's thought. On the publication of George Eliot's

[18] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Letters to Americans* (New York: International Publ., 1953), p. 83; Conway, *Autobiography,* II, pp. 268–70.

translation of *The Essence of Christianity,* Conway saw Feuerbach as continuing the effort begun with German research and Unitarianism "to reconstitute Christianity on a natural basis." Feuerbach, according to Conway, found Christianity more interesting than Christ as a great chapter in the spiritual history of mankind. After critics like Strauss had worked on the myths and dogmas in the Bible, Feuerbach pursued the question of their origin, "the mental and moral facts beneath them." He found the roots of religion to be man's self-consciousness as a species. Hence God is the personification by man of his own higher powers as a distinct being. In Feuerbach's words:

> Man—this is the mystery of religion—projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject; he thinks of himself as an object to himself, but as the object of an object, of another being.[19]

On this basis Conway agreed with Feuerbach that the more God is exalted in theological Christianity, the more man is degraded. The more God is reified as a transcendent, metaphysical entity, the more is Christ's one supreme command, "Love," replaced by the divisive, hate-breeding rule, "Believe." Conway fully accepted Feuerbach's view of Christ:

> He who loves man for man's sake, who rises to . . . universal love . . . he is Christ himself. He does what Christ did, what made Christ Christ . . . Where there arises the consciousness of the species as species, the idea of humanity as a whole, Christ disappears, but not his true nature.[20]

Sharing Feuerbach's attitude toward "faith" and the command

[19] Ludwig Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity,* trans. George Eliot [Marian Evans] (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), pp. 29–30. Cf. Conway, "Feuerbach," 22 January 1882, manuscript in Conway Collection, Columbia University Library.

[20] Conway, *op. cit.* Cf. Feuerbach, *op. cit.,* p. 269.

to believe in theological Christianity, Conway welcomed the decay of faith as a liberation of humanity. Nothing of real value is lost in the decay of faith. We only cease to project. We no longer, as it were, cross the stream to fetch water on the other side because we have come to realize that the water we fetched comes from the stream itself at our feet. "Every day," Conway was pleased to observe, "the Christ of superstition declines, and Christ becomes a name for human charity."

Relying on Feuerbach rather than principles of Auguste Comte's "positivism," which he found ambiguous, Conway emphasized the moral implications of the "religion of Humanity." Feuerbach had stated the moral law corresponding to the scientific law Darwin had discovered and Emerson had translated into spiritual truth—namely, "Man has his highest being, his God, in himself; not as an individual but in his essential nature—his species."[21] On this basis moral conduct is action in loyalty to the law of the species but a law requiring variation and individuality in the service of universal ends. This, in contrast to Jewish or Christian sectarianism, is the basis of a truly Catholic religion in which man "finds his saviour by becoming one." Such a religion, not faith in a supernatural being, is properly the "religion of Humanity" foreshadowed by Feuerbach.

Shortly before his death in 1907, and after he had returned to America to spend his last years in New York at work on his memoirs and vindicating biographies of Tom Paine and Edmund Randolph, one of his ancestors, Conway gave testimony to the lasting influence of German philosophy, particularly the Left-Hegelian philosophy of Strauss, on his thinking. In an address on "Dogma and Science" at the Rome Congress of Freethinkers, he recalled how Strauss had insisted that "all freedom must be preceded by emancipation from supernaturalism," the birthplace of superstition and hence oppression. "The man who gives up the

[21] Conway, "Individual and Species," *Lessons for the Day* (London: E. W. Allen, 1882), I, pp. 63, *et passim.*, Cf. *ibid.*, II, pp. 11, 135–43.

whole of his moral nature to an unquestioned authority," Strauss had maintained, "suffers a paralysis of his mind, and all the changes of outward circumstances in the world cannot make him a free man.[22]

In the whole course of Conway's life and thought, the views of Hegel, Strauss, and Feuerbach were the major impetus for a "New Reformation" of Christianity—a reformation that is still going on and has found its latest, somewhat sensational, expression in current efforts of "radical theology" to formulate "the secular meaning of the Gospel" and the principle of "religionless Christianity." That meaning and principle were at the center of Conway's thought a century ago. For Conway the "New Reformation" began with what he called the "fifth gospel" of Emerson and Parker. It fused Left-Hegelian philosophy with the scientific outlook inspired by Darwin, and carried the abolitionist passion for freedom and humanity into movements for wider social reform—the emancipation of labor, the full realization of democracy, and the achievement of world peace.

[22] Conway, *Addresses and Reprints 1850–1907* (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1909), p. 367; *Autobiography*, II, p. 14.

LOYD DAVID EASTON *and*

WARREN SYLVESTER SMITH

"Public Conversation" on

Conway, April 25, 1969



Photo by Don Moll

MONCURE CONWAY'S JOURNEY BACK TO EARTH

WARREN SYLVESTER SMITH

April 25, 1969

Warren Sylvester Smith

A graduate of Muhlenberg and the State University of Iowa, Professor Smith has been a member of the Department of Theatre Arts, the Pennsylvania State University, from 1946 to 1967, and since that time Director of General Education in the Arts, and Assistant Director of the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies. He served in the United States Army, 1942–1946, and as co-director of work camps with the American Friends Service Committee, 1953 and 1955. He is the author of articles on subjects ranging from Bernard Shaw to Quaker history, and among these Moncure Conway appears as a recurrent theme. Conway figures largely in one of his two books published in 1968, THE LONDON HERETICS, 1870–1914.

MONCURE CONWAY'S JOURNEY BACK TO EARTH

In 1870 Moncure Conway wrote a little parable which he called *The Earthward Pilgrimage*. In it he reversed the imagery of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progess*. He had come, he said, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, with Bunyan's help. But he found the place dull and unsatisfactory and he could not really rejoice in the fate of those he had left behind. He determined, therefore, to make the pilgrimage back and to rediscover humanity. It is an allegory in the first person, recounting his own spiritual pilgrimage up to that time.

He is writing from London where he had come seven years before on a melodramatic mission to end the American Civil War. As an unofficial representative of Northern abolitionists, he contacted the Confederacy's envoy to England, a J. M. Mason, suggesting that if the South would agree to emancipation, the North would agree to secession and withdraw from the war. The young Conway did not of course have the authority to make such an approach. In any case both North and South were by then committed to the bitter struggle, and the would-be peacemaker got nothing for his pains but embarrassment and vilification. But while in London he and the congregation of South Place Chapel

had discovered one another, and there must be few instances on record of so compatible a union of man and institution.

The Finsbury congregation, once Unitarian, had moved farther and farther to the left, until it could only be called, under Conway, a Freethought chapel. This was the great age of Secularism in London, and there were a number of such congregations, none as successful or lasting as Conway's. They represented the desire of the newly enlightened intellectual bourgeoisie to keep up the customary church ties and church-like activities and a sense of respectability, without the bother of a creed, or indeed without the necessity for belief in God at all. Conway preached humanistic sermons, read from his *Sacred Anthology,* and indulged in a kind of oral meditation which had the tone of a prayer without being one. They sang carefully edited hymns.

It was a pleasant arrangement for everybody and was so successful that for a time Conway added a second congregation at the Athenaeum. South Place became the center for debates and midweek secular lectures, as well as a social and musical center for the religiously liberated. Conway was gregarious. He knew everyone from Darwin to Carlyle. He was also literate, and contributed articles to all the liberal magazines, published his sermons (discourses), and ran a kind of transatlantic literary agency for Harpers. Incidentally, though South Place never paid him more than a pittance, he was able to live with his growing family very comfortably.

The Earthward Pilgrimage makes it clear that he has left the Methodism of his circuit-riding days (and his Dickinsonian days) far behind, and that even the transcendentalism of Emerson and the Unitarianism of Theodore Parker no longer fit him as well as they did when he carried the message from Boston to Washington and Cincinnati in the 1850's. Yet he remains theistic and essentially optimistic. We are children of a common father. And the living Christ can be thought of in terms of what is best in Humanity. Religion must concern itself with the problems of this world, not

the next, and there are enough earthly miseries and cupidities to make even the successful pastor of South Place Chapel fainthearted. Nevertheless, as the angel and the youth flew over the world (near the end of his parable), they found that if they flew low enough they could see not only the troubles of the planet, but also those who were already mobilizing to eradicate them:

> nay, even among the wretched and vile they found many heroically vanquishing the dangers and temptations of their hard lot, and coming closer still, saw tints of kindliness and feeling in tainted hearts—in all, the hope and prophecy of a fairer destiny.[1]

Conway would have considered himself a realist, but, as you see, there was a romantic-sentimental quality in his writing that was not unlike that of the novelists of the period—Mrs. Humphry Ward, for example, or George Eliot. A decade after the publication of *Origin of Species* he was sure, as were many of his liberal contemporaries, that the new age of science would liberate mankind, not circumscribe him with a new determinism.

> I will maintain that this theory [Darwin's] has added fresh tints of love, brighter beams of reason to the universe by opening our eyes to new aspects of it . . . The whole tendency and evolution of the world has been to the end of unfolding in man a power to overcome all the selfishness of brute nature.[2]

From Darwin he extrapolates, as Darwin and Huxley were careful not to do, a *moral* evolution.

Now these were the days of reform movements of all kinds—religious, political, economic, social, sexual, dietary, crematory, in almost every aspect of life one can think of. There were riots, marches, confrontations with the police, test cases in the courts. Given his liberal leanings on all these subjects, where did Moncure

[1] Conway: *Addresses and Reprints, 1850–1907,* Boston and New York, p. 249.

[2] "The Pre-Darwinite and Post-Darwinite World" in *Idols and Ideals,* London, 1877, pp. 90–98.

Conway stand as an *activist?* Well, he was never injured in a street battle. He never spent time in jail. He never pleaded his own case in court. He did not get thrown out of his church. This made him different from such other heretics as Charles Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, G. W. Foote, W. T. Stead, Rev. Stewart Headlam, or Father George Tyrrell—some of them his good friends. Yet it would be wrong to think of Conway as aloof. Even by profession he was partly a journalist (he was at various times a paid correspondent for both London and New York newspapers), and he liked to be where things happened. He was strongly partisan in almost every movement, and preached and wrote vigorously in support of his causes: anti-militarism, anti-colonialism, women's rights, fair labor practices, anti-Sabbatarianism, opposition to the blasphemy laws, and so on.

The point I want to make is that though he was not the kind of activist who gets himself arrested, he did not live in an ivory tower. The conditions and events which he lived through pressed in on him enough to change some of his views about the nature of man, his ability to govern himself, and his part in a possible scheme of the Godhead.

A remarkable quality of Conway's was his readiness to admit that these changes were going on within him. He held no brief for consistency in such matters. One of the disarming reasons he put forth for the inconsistencies in the gospels was that Jesus, too, kept changing his mind and that some of his remarks were obviously immature. "I would not," he said, "in my humble concerns, like to have what I said as an orthodox preacher quoted against what I believe now."[3]

Most of us today can not know what it was like for a Victorian to make the journey from belief to unbelief. But Conway knew, and it helped him to think that every great spiritual leader, including Jesus, had made a similar break with the past.

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[3] "Christianity," in *Idols and Ideals,* p. 26.

> Those who have known what it is to wrestle with doubts and misgivings, who have known what it is to break the ties of love and friendship in order to follow truth and right, can best hear all the pathos of that lamentation that comes across the ages, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee . . ."

And when Jesus left the temple,

> that was just such a heart-broken man abandoning finally and forever the orthodox religion of his time, as you, my friend, may have known in your pilgrimage.[4]

He could not accept Jesus as an idealized figure. He had to accept him as human or not at all. The Christ of the Oberammergau Passion Play, for example, much admired by his clergymen acquaintances, he found to be a lifeless effigy—"like the images turned out by the thousands in Italian factories"—without trace of the suffering, sometimes eloquent, impulsive man of the gospels.

There comes a time when the earthward pilgrim must answer forthrightly the question, "Do you consider yourself a Christian?" By 1876 Conway was ready to answer without equivocation: "No." Try as he might to redefine the concept of Christianity, he could not find himself within it. In one of his most important theological essays, "Christianity," he reviews the beginnings and growth of Christianity, the changes it had brought to the world, its decline, and its "afterglow." The 137-page essay is heavily under the influence of Strauss and Renan, but it is none the less a personal document.

He confesses that he had tried hard to find a resting place inside the Christian categories. Both the Unitarian and the "liberal Christian" positions had promised a new dawn. They proved instead to be the *nachglimmer*—the afterglow—of a decaying institution. The manner of his rejection of each of the claims of

[4] p. 27.

the "new Christianity" will dispel, perhaps, some of the suspicions arising from his prose that he was guided more by sentiment than by reason.

1. *One should hold to the name of Christianity as a means of preserving a continuity.* But his is specious, says Conway, for the "enlightened Christians" like Jowett or Newman, are held up to support *unenlightened* Christianity. The stand-pat orthodox priest or minister says in effect, "If Christianity is good enough for such intelligent leaders, why isn't it good enough for you?" Conway has no wish to become such a reference point.

2. *Christianity simply means love to God and love to man.* But Christ himself goes far beyond this: that men must believe on him to be saved, and if they don't they will go to "eternal despair where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched."[5]

> Oh, they argue that Christ never meant that . . . he means that the fire *will* be quenched and the worm *will* die. . . .

And perhaps, Conway says, a long drill in exegesis and hermeneutics might prove the texts questionable. But he is not seeking a religion adaptable only to Greek scholars.

3. *Christianity really means the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.* Again, Christ went far beyond such a generalization. He declared that the Jews were chosen above all races; he called the Canaanites dogs, and told his disciples to have nothing to do with the Gentiles.[6] And certainly historically Christianity has been bitterly sectarian.

4. *Jesus led a perfect life and we should imitate it.* Only, says Conway, if we can imagine such a life for ourselves. As far as the New Testament is concerned, we can find the egotistical Christ, the fanatical Christ, the violent Christ, the superstitious

[5] Mark 9:43–48.
[6] Matthew 10:5.

Christ. Also we can find the unresisting abject Christ, perfunctory and spiritless. . . . "The various types of character ascribed to him would be impossible in any one man." It is possible, Conway thinks, to see through this confusion and find a real man in the scriptures—perhaps even a heroic one; but not a perfect one, and not a model for their times.

Having thus disposed of the chief rationale of his liberal contemporaries for clinging to the term Christian, he goes on to scold them for doing exactly what they charge the orthodox with doing—accepting what they like from the scriptures and ignoring or reinterpreting the rest. "That is using false weights and measures," Conway charges. There is no point in labeling all the virtues, like charity, as Christian, and all the vices as pagan. "Men have no right to take their own system at its best and that of others at its worst." He concludes

> It is not within the power of any mind, however ingenious, to liberalize Christianity so far that it will include all humanity in an equal embrace—Jews and Gentiles, Hindoos, Mohammedans, Buddhists—and draw no line against any man's convictions.[7]

In any case, the Bible has really little to do with popular Christianity. He notes that by the 1870's it has been translated into 150 languages and distributed in the amount of 150,000,000 copies. Yet in 1,000 years Christianity had not made a million converts from the "pagans." The Christian sects themselves, he charged, do not read the Bible. They "read into it or extort out of it certain things that will prove English sects right and all the rest of the world wrong." That, in fact, is the way all bibles are read—the Vedas or the Koran as well. Conway recommends that we should read each other's bibles and read them with freedom. And his natural irrepressible optimism breaking through once again, he predicts "The bibles of the world will mutually unlock

[7] *Idols and Ideals,* p. 118.

each other and a great interchange of world experiences take place, from which universal religion shall emerge."[8]

I have mentioned that Conway himself had put together a *Sacred Anthology* which he used at South Place and which was widely used elsewhere. Obviously, however, he was here recommending an intercultural exchange of religious ideas on a much more fundamental level.

It was partly his interest in the Orient and in Oriental religions that led him, first, to a year's leave for a trip around the world, and finally to his decision to retire from South Place after 21 years there, even though he was scarcely more than 50 years old.

Having read himself out of Christianity, as we have seen, and having taken most of his congregation with him, he proceeded in his farewell sermon (27 July 1884) to renounce the name of God altogether. His reasoning here does not seem to me to be as convincing as it was formerly, because he rests his case on a social idea of God rather than a theological one. What society does in the name of God, in other words, makes it impossible for Conway to accept God. In this farewell sermon, which he called his Apologia, he reviewed again his long journey from Methodism. "Just one third of a century has passed since I started out to save souls," he began, and we may safely assume that the South Place congregation thought that image funny enough to laugh at—and that Conway intended that they should! He mentioned, rather nostalgically, *The Earthward Pilgrimage* of 14 years before when he had written hopefully of Theism, as "a newly-discovered and as yet unexplored continent." But now he rejects Theism too, for Theism means belief in God. And God means a proud monarch

> for not believing in whom a parent must be deprived of her child, men must be dragged from their families and shut up in jail, Members of Parliament must be deprived of their seats and con-

[8] pp. 126–128.

stituencies dishonored, and ladies refused admission into seats of learning.[9]

Conway did not have to make these references clear at South Place. He had preached sermons on all of these causes and he and many of the congregation had been active in the movements for justice and freedom. But today we might want to pause and note to what he was referring.

"a parent deprived of her child . . ."

Annie Besant had left the bed and board of her clergyman husband, taking her daughter with her, when she found that she could no longer receive the sacraments with a clear conscience. She joined forces with the eminent Secularist of the day, Charles Bradlaugh, appeared on lecture platforms with him, and with him fought a case in court over the right to print and distribute a book on birth control. Her husband sued and obtained the custody of the daughter.

"men dragged from their families and shut up in jail . . ."

G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker* served in jail for blasphemy, after refusing to obey an order to desist in the printing of a series of comic Bible cartoons.

"Members of Parliament deprived of their seats . . ."

Bradlaugh himself was five times reelected to Parliament by his constituency of Northampton, but by virtue of his being a professed atheist was refused the oath and refused his seat during a running battle that lasted 12 years. As Conway spoke, it would be another two years before he was successful.

"ladies refused admission into seats of learning . . ."

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[9] "Apologia" from *Farewell Discourses*, London, 1884, p. 172.

The year before, Alice Bradlaugh (Charles's daughter) and Annie Besant were refused admission to University College, London.

So long, then, as the word "God" meant this kind of repression, even Theism could not develop "a noble idea of God any more than one can carve a fair statue out of mud."[10] Nor could he think of worshipping "Humanity" as the Positivists claimed to do, since Humanity itself too often stood for ignorance and brutality.

But he could not give up some notion of a religion. He was not only a born preacher, he was also a born pastor. He was cleverly regarded by his freethinking flock as a counsellor and father-figure, and he seems to have enjoyed the role of confessor. Unlike the Bible-smashers and blasphemers whom he constantly defended, Conway retained a sweet urbanity. Among his other civilizing graces he preserved his humor.

"I do not suppose the Church of England will be disestablished," he said in his farewell discourse, "because I believe it will be converted. There are angels hovering around it—Science, Art, the angel of the Word [?], they are struggling with its dismal creeds, shaming its superstitions, and they will humanize it."

And his attitude toward the orthodox—so different from the savage sarcasm of Bradlaugh—was one of infinite patience.

> Let the Christians pause amid their disputes and say—See how these untheological people love one another. Let them see also how you love them. If they do not love you it is because they are afraid: they have never been where you are, and tremble at going into what is to them the dark. But we have been where they are; we have been orthodox, or our relatives and teachers have been, and we know how much sweetness and charity may abide with orthodoxy. . . . Every superstition is also a poem. Every dogma is a seed cast from some past flower of faith. . . . Man may meet

[10] p. 173.

denial with denial, but they will not readily smite the face of Truth if her beauty appear and her voice be low.[11]

Conway returned to the United States with his family, to travel, lecture, and write. For a time South Place was under the leadership of another American, Stanton Coit, who had the name changed to the South Place Ethical Society. But the South Place congregation was more the creature of Moncure Conway than he himself knew, and after floundering for seven years they persuaded him to return in 1892. It was a warm reunion, of course, but the old spirit could not be recaptured. He succeeded in reviving the institution, and in 1897 he left for good, and took his sick wife, Ellen, back to New York where she died. He had lost a young son, Emerson, soon after he had first emigrated to England. Another, Dana, died at the age of twenty-one soon after his first retirement from South Place. Another son and a daughter survived, but they were settled on their own, so that Moncure's later years were trying to one who so loved the warmth of human fellowship.

There were other disappointments. Like many another rationalist of his generation, he had pinned his hopes on Science as the rising force that would set men free. In 1878 he felt he was realizing one of his fondest dreams in bringing together scientists and scholars from all over the world at South Place to form a "Congress of Liberal Thinkers." It received world-wide publicity, the cast including such men as Huxley and Tyndall. The scientists could agree on nothing but the most generalized of pious resolutions. Within a year the new society was abandoned. On the evidence it seemed that the scholars and scientists could cooperate no better than the theologians.

In addition, he had hopes for an era of peace. He had in fact composed a rather complete plan for a kind of World Court—a

[11] pp. 186–187.

quite advanced concept for 1900. In the meantime the Boer War broke out and immediately became the despair of all liberals, almost to the extent that Vietnam is today. Britain expected to subdue the rebel Boers in a few months. Instead it cost England nearly three years and 220,000,000 pounds to subdue a population of 50,000 adult males. The result was, among other things, an unprecedented militarization of England and an escalation of armaments throughout the West.

No wonder that when his Positivist friend, Frederic Harrison, visited him in New York in 1901, he wrote home to his wife: "Moncure Conway is aged—looks eighty-five . . ." He was, of course, 69.

None of this showed through his later writings, by the way, which are full of charm and grace. They include his works on Thomas Paine—2 volumes of biography and 4 of the collected works—which remain, paradoxically, the only works for which Conway is generally remembered, probably the only ones in print. They include also his most serious and noteworthy treatment of Bible scholarship, *Solomon and Solomonic Literature* (1899), which I would nominate as one of the books most in need of re-printing. He wrote, too, his two-volume *Autobiography* (1904) with warmth and quiet humor.

One of his last public utterances was here at Dickinson College exactly 62 years ago, on 25 April 1907, seven months before his death in Paris. There were two occasions for the speech: it was the 225th anniversary of William Penn's Frame of Government for the People of Pennsylvania; and it marked the founding of a new department at your College in "Peace and Public Service."

I regret to say that it was not a good speech. It was far too long and very discursive—so unlike the carefully tailored discourses of his London years. But it was revealing of the man and the near-desolation to which his pilgrimage had brought him. He praised William Penn and the Quakers and Andrew Carnegie's Peace Movement, but beyond that the speech was a catalog of

regrets. He regretted the American Revolution which, he thought, set off a sequence of events that exacerbated the slavery issue and led directly into the Civil War. "And has it ended yet?" he asked 62 years ago.

And he regretted the way the nations were heading, especially our nation—

> an increase of military ambition and lust for empire, a consecration of the instrument by which slavery was removed—the sword, on whose hilt even when sheathed our hand ever rests, is a menace to the world. . . . It is now utopian to think of the white native of America approaching foreigners as Penn approached the aborigines, unarmed and trusting the moral forces to draw like a new star all human hearts . . . to a new-born prince of peace.[12]

When his guard was down—not before an audience—in personal correspondence, he had made his feelings even clearer. From New York he reported:

> Things in this country are so unmitigatedly atrocious, mean, and cruel—and daily getting worse—that perhaps I [am] unable to see the hopeful side in England. I can see no great brains or hearts in public life anymore there than here—(nor anywhere except in France).[13]

And from London; after the outbreak of the Boer War:

> Jingoism has invaded even South Place and possibly the Omar Khayyam Club. O my lost countries![14]

Conway's pilgrimage back to earth was not, as you see, without the pain of disenchantment. But considering the steadfastness

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[12] "William Penn" in *Addresses and Reprints*, p. 408.

[13] Conway to Mrs. Fletcher-Smith, a.l.s., 16 April 1903, Conway Hall Collection.

[14] Edward Clodd, *Memories*, London, 1926. Letter to Clodd dated 26 Aug. 1900, p. 242.

of his search and the gentleness of his manner, Dickinson College may perhaps feel privileged that it played some part near the beginning of his journey, and that he found occasion to return so close to the end of it.

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